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PHARO FACES

by ROY NORTON

MIXED FACES

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BY

ROY NORTON

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MIXED FACES

CHAPTER I

IF Nature is infallible, there should be some philosophic or eugenic professor arise and explain why she made such a grievous error in the personal appearance, vocal qualities, and general gestures of the learned judge, astute politician and hopeful statesman, Hon. J. Woodworth-Granger and Mr. James Gollop, perigrinating drummer for a chocolate house. Either the Honorable Judge should have been a commercial traveler, or the commercial traveler a judge. Outwardly they could have passed for specimen twins, given handicaps to all comers, and easily won the blue ribbon. Inwardly their characteristics were as different as those of any two animals could be, the Judge having the ponderous gravity of a camel, whilst Mr. James

Gollop was as sedate as a monkey and twice as ebullient. The Judge suffered from a prodigious sense of responsibility and dignity, whilst his double was given to frivolities, a distressing sense of the ridiculous and was as irresponsible and happy as a flea hurdling from one boarding house to another in a dog pound.

The first intimation the Judge had that some other person dared to look like him was when, as he strode into the lobby of the Media City hotel in the best city in his state, a grinning porter rushed up, seized his suit case and said affably, "Righto, Old Sport! Got here just in time this trip and I'll send your cases to number two sample room, and open 'em up if you'll gimme the burglar's kit. The room you kicked for last month—remember."

The Hon. J. Woodworth-Granger, who from force of habit never said anything until he had formulated the complete sentence and then edited it, and having a mind that moved with the frantic speed and wild agility of a tractor engine pulling a carload of coal, glared ponderously at the porter who took it as a joke. Gollop sometimes assumed that prodigious seriousness when about to pass out specimens of his best humor.

"Spring it! Spring it! I'm ready to laugh," the porter encouraged him.

"Young man," said the Judge, "I am not accustomed to having those in your evident station of life address me with any such familiarity. You should be old enough to know that it is unseemly. You can not succeed, even in a menial occupation, unless you cultivate that respect which is due not only to your superiors, but to those who patronize the hotel, or any other undertaking in which you are employed."

He might have gone ahead and imposed a fine for contempt of court, or sentenced the unfortunate porter to ten years in the penitentiary, had not other arrivals come surging through the door, which reminded him that perhaps it were wiser to register ahead of all newcomers and thus endeavor to secure the choicest room for himself. The Judge had the trait which is shared alike by some human beings and many hogs, that he demanded the best though every other human—or hog—has to suffer. He liked to make sure that his own feet were firmly planted in the choice end of the trough; so he hurried to the desk, leaving the jovial porter still grinning, still expectant and quite hopeful that

the tip would be of its usual generous proportions. Jim tipped liberally, because his firm was what is known as "easy on the tabs." Anybody can be liberal if someone else furnishes the platinum. That's why trust magnates and drummers can't be distinguished, because somebody else always pays the bills, although there has never yet been invented any painless dentistry for extraction of the purse. The room clerk in the hotel was new to her job, and so was the boy who conducted the Judge to his room; but, sad to relate, the chambermaid winked at the Judge and blew him a kiss. She was rather pretty too. Now to have a pretty chambermaid blow one a kiss when he arrives in a fine hotel is not objectionable to most travelers. It shows such a friendly spirit, and makes one feel at home, or else fancy that he is still in the running and not so old and ugly as he had begun to believe. Some men immediately adjust their ties and brush their hair and grin into the mirror; but the Judge wasn't that sort at all. The proof that he was no gentleman lies in the fact that he scowled in outraged dignity at that pretty chambermaid who had most prettily blown him

a kiss, and that she gasped, sniffed, simpered and said, "You ain't forgot me, have you?"

"Forgotten you! Damn it! I never saw you before in my life!" said the Judge, annoyed and exasperated to the rare point where his temper overcame his language.

"G'wan Jimmy, you little josher! You'll be round chuckin' me under the chin before the lights come on. Gee! There goes the bell again! I'll bet my switch it's that scraggy old hen in forty-four, wantin' me to run out and buy her some hair pins, or to hook her up so she'll look like a prize winner at a wasp show. She makes me sick, she does! But I'll—Yes Ma'am! Coming right away," she answered in a honeyed voice, as the lady guest was heard calling her name through a transom somewhere in the distance.

The Judge carefully shut and locked his door. He was a church member in good standing and an unmarried man, so had to lock the girl out or perhaps thought it best to lock himself in. One never knows! The porter appeared with his suit case in his hand and perturbation in his soul, the double burden sufficing to render him serious.

"The baggageman says your sample trunks

ain't come. He says he went to the baggage master and they had a look. He says you orter get busy on the wires because maybe they carried 'em through on sixty-two and her next stop is at Chicago, and you can't get your layout back before——"

"I have no trunks, I tell you," interrupted the Judge, with freezing dignity. "Put that suit case over there in the corner and get out. Who do you think I am, may I ask? A commercial traveler?"

He had intended this as a stern piece of sarcasm; but it had the effect of causing the porter to blink, stare, drop the suit case and then blurt out, "Good Lord! You're Jimmy Gollop what travels for the Columbus Chocolate Company, ain't you? You're Jim Gollop what has stopped here for years, ain't you? If you ain't——" He jerked off his cap, scratched his red head and added—"If you ain't—— For the Lord's sake don't say nothin'——"

"Jimmy Gollop! A commercial traveler! Me?" the Judge actually spluttered and then, recovering all his overpowering magisterial arrogance, responded loftily, "I am J. Woodworth-Granger, Judge of the Fourth District

Court. You go down and tell the manager of this hotel to come here at once. I wish to see him. I demand an explanation for all this outrageous flippancy. If his guests are to be subjected to such coarse impoliteness, discourtesy, annoyance and familiarity, he should be notified or ousted from his position. It is an imposition on the public which can not be condoned by any one with a sense of propriety, or any citizen with regard for public welfare. Go and get him!"

The manager, anticipating some rare practical joke, or perhaps apprehensive of such, having experienced some of Mr. Jimmy Gollop's freakish efforts in the past, appeared and greeted the Judge with, "Look here, old man, for my sake let go. Don't pull anything this time. My board of directors is to have a meeting this afternoon and——" But the stern eye of the angry judge checked him.

The manager in his turn blinked, and gasped and then exclaimed, "Jordon says you told him you were the Judge of the Fourth District Court. You look to me like Jim Gollop. If you're really Judge Woodworth-Granger, I beg your pardon and think you ought to get your face changed for your own protection. If you're

Jimmy Gollop—and I'm a Dutchman if you aren't—have some sense and quit your kidding. This has gone far enough! Look here, Jimmy, there's a limit to even one of your jokes. I can't stand for it to-day when my board of directors is coming. The last time you were here and put red fire on the roof and then turned in a fire alarm cost me twenty-five iron men and the hotel company a round dozen of Pommery. It's going too strong, I tell you! I'm a joke hound myself but a starving Dutchman can get too much limburger if he's locked up in a cheese factory."

Mutual explanations, and abject apologies on the part of the manager and the porter followed. Everybody apologized, except the pretty chambermaid, and the judge never saw her again. Also that was a detail he didn't mention. He rather hoped she would come and apologize. In fact he thought hopefully of what he might say to her in his kindliest judicial manner, and occasionally took furtive glances into the hall to see if she was coming. He was disappointed, perhaps, because she didn't come, for he was positive he could say things for the good of her soul, and—Oh, well!—he always subscribed for

the Home Missionary Society. Moreover she was a particularly pretty girl as chambermaids go, and there is never an orchard without its peach.

So, in due time, the Judge got away from that hotel unscathed; but to his extreme annoyance, now that he had openly plunged into politics and felt the necessity for becoming acquainted with the larger cities in the state despite the consequent discomforts of travel and sojourn, this man Gollop always intruded. That unfortunate similarity in appearance and gesture, voice and manner, was proven on a dozen occasions. That the habits of the Judge and the drummer were divergent made it all the more annoying. The Judge never had associated with, nor understood, what some persons called "A bully good fellow." He thought it was a rank and preposterous assumption on the part of a mere drummer to look, and talk, and act like a real judge who nursed an ambition to be governor of the state. It preyed upon his mind and caused him occasionally to say things that he wouldn't have said if he hadn't lost his temper, become momentarily a real human being, and found an unexpected safety valve in speech. Men merely

vary in the choice of words. One says "Oh, dear me!" Another "Oh, Fudge!" another "Oh, Pshaw!" and so on down to the common, vulgar, horny-handed sonofagun who blurts out "Damn it all!" or worse and—the judge finally got to the limit. One writes this with glad, cheerful hopefulness for the entire human race because it's a fine thing to be natural and human, after all.

In the meantime Mr. James Gollop was working his Eastern territory. Working it both ways and up and down the middle; selling chocolates to people who thought they might do better with So-and-So, inducing some men to overorder, others to underorder, tipping porters, buying—sody pop (?)—now and then, spinning yarns, peddling the latest funny story, explaining to his house why his expense account should be passed without those querulous protests, and generally comporting himself according to his own erratic and sometimes pyrotechnical ideas. And when Jimmy breezed westward again and heard that the Judge of the Fourth Judicial District was his double he chuckled, laughed, and finally beat his plump legs at what was told him.

"By Gosh!" he chuckled to a confrère, "if that judge looks and sounds so much like me, I'll

make a trip up to Princetown just to have a look at him and shake his paw, and congratulate him. We ought to make a right good team, although I can't exactly recommend him for his judgment in the choice of faces. I never yet won a beauty prize, although once upon a time I did win a family photograph album at a pie eating contest. Huckleberry too! Spoiled a forty-dollar suit of clothes and a two-dollar tie to win a sixty-cent album at a town fair. Got the album to prove it. Got it on the parlor table with the marble top down home in Maryland, and every time Maw looks at it she smiles and says 'Jimmy may be not much good at anything he's tried yet, but he can eat pie!' "

Now the peculiar part of Jim Gollop's make-up was that underneath all his banter, and his lightness, and his irresponsible sense of humor, there lurked something which made him keep his resolutions. He was a pretty good sort after all. Just a very human, contented, work-a-day man who liked other good fellows, was sorry for those who took life too seriously, never did any person a contemplated harm, knew neither malice nor envy, was always a booster and never a knocker, and whose sense of humor was gen-

erously given out for expansion rather than preserved to harass his own soul. So, one day, he made a sixty-mile journey out of his way to see, become acquainted with, and felicitate this judge whom he so startlingly resembled. For sixty miles he chuckled and bubbled with anticipation and curiosity. He even thought of a forgotten joke or two to spring and resolved that what he spent in entertainment for this meeting should come from his own purse and never appear on the expense account. True, it cost him a pang to forego that expense account, but he didn't see how he could ever explain to his firm that it had been necessary to travel sixty miles and entertain a judge of a state court in the hope of selling him a big order of chocolate drops. He was afraid the firm might be skeptical. Some people can't be convinced.

And so, picturing a mutual hand shaking, some lively interchanges and facetious comments on what constituted good looks and bad looks, perhaps a luncheon or a dinner, and a new friend through the strange accident of nature, he climbed the stairs to Judge J. Woodworth-Granger's office with a cheerful smile on his face, and after a gasp from the office boy and

some stares of astonishment from a clerk or two, was ushered in. He had expected to enter the tropics. He found himself as "happy as a Mexican hairless dog in the Arctic regions" as Marshall would say. Cold? There may be in the vast, dead planets of space places much colder than the North pole; but these would have been warm and comfortable compared with the atmosphere of Judge Woodworth-Granger's austere office when he turned his eyes on the person of Mr. James Gollop. Here before him, grinning and sticking out a plump, friendly hand, was the man to whose personal similarity he strongly objected, and of whose personal ways he disapproved.

"And so, sir," said the Judge icily, as he stood up and scrutinized the drummer, "you are the man who has caused me so much personal embarrassment, indignity, familiarity, and—if I never loathed my own appearance before, I can do so now after looking at you!"

Jimmy's grin froze on his face, became hard, and slowly changed to something very different. His well-meaning hand slowly came back as if half-paralyzed by such a reception. It had never before been rebuffed. It was a liberal

hand that had gone into its pocket many times to help those in hard luck. It had never been slow in friendliness or that courtesy which prevails between well-meaning and generous hands throughout the sad old world. It had seldom been hastily raised in anger. But now it shut hard and its owner said, "So that's the way of it, eh? You're sore because I look like you. Why shouldn't I get hot under the collar because you look like me? About the only difference between us is that you're a judge and I'm a drummer. That doesn't keep you from being a good sport, does it? I came a long way to get acquainted with you and I like most people. It's not my fault that you look so much like me, is it?"

"Look like you? It's your fault that you look like me!" snapped the Judge as if that fault were an impertinence.

"Phew!" said Jimmy, puffing out his cheeks. "That's the sort you are, eh? Guess I made a mistake."

"I guess you did," grimly said the Judge, mimicking Jimmy's voice without in the least realizing it. And then he added, "Good day, Mr. Gollop. I hope I may not see you again

and that you travel in some other territory than this."

As if incredulous, Jimmy stared at him for a full quarter minute and then, recovering his good humor, clapped his hat on his head and assuming a highly melodramatic air in imitation of the Judge's ponderous methods said, "Harold, beware! Beware! I say! It's a long worm that has no turning. Them papers shall be mine! I swear it on me lyfe." And with a boisterous shout of laughter turned out through the door and down the stairs. That ribald laughter still floated upward as he made his departure, and the Judge was annoyed. Very much annoyed. He felt himself soiled; quite as if the garbage van man had suddenly tried to kiss him with brotherly affection. It was outrageous! Impossible! And a mere drummer, too!

Jimmy retired to an hotel, pausing on the way to buy a pair of blue goggles, and to fit them on, and to pull his hat down over his eyes.

"I don't intend to look like that old catamount in his own town anyhow," he said to himself. "If he's as popular with his fellow citizens as he is with me it might not be safe. Wish I had a

set of false whiskers to wear during my sojourn. Wonder when the next train leaves? I'm like the chap that got pinned down under a burning railway wreck and said he thought he really ought to get away from there. That's me! I want to get away from here."

In the hotel room he dug his pocket time table from his grip and no hungry reader ever plunged into the pages of the latest "Best Seller" more avidly than did he thumb those flimsy pages. His capable fingers turned the leaves rapidly and, being expert and highly trained in working out the abstruse puzzles and problems with which time table people always try to fill their books so that people will get tired of seeking information and look at the advertisements, in less than five minutes he slammed the book shut and almost viciously hurled it back into his bag.

"By Heck!" he muttered, despairingly, "no train out till four o'clock to-morrow morning and—I'll bet it smells of new laid milk and long laid cows. There'll be an hour's delay while they fill the baggage car with chickens in coops. Serves the chickens right for getting up that early. Ought to go some place and have their

heads chopped off. There'll be one combination smoker car filled with yawning farm hands who wear fertilizer on their boots. But it's me for that train!"

Then, recovering his cheerfulness, he sallied out to visit all the confectionary shops; but met with no success and attributed his failure to the hideous goggles and the fact that his customary happy and seductive grin was slightly stiff about the corners as if his face needed oiling. "Hang it all! Nobody but an undertaker could look happy in this town," Jimmy thought after his final effort. "No wonder that old cuss is so solemn. I'd be too, if I lived in a morgue!"

To escape the town he decided to make a pedestrian trip to where the only big enterprise near Princetown was in full blast. It was spoken of as "out at the falls" as if they were the only ones on earth. It was two and a half miles from the town and the day was hot. "Thank Heaven it might be worse," thought Jimmy. "I might have to tote a hundred pound grip this far in the hope of getting an order, and now all I've got to lug is my goggles." He took them off, wiped the sweat from his face, stopped to watch some fish in a stream, regretted that he hadn't

brought some string and a fish hook, contemplated a swim, and then trudged onward, whistling as he went and wholly forgetful of his woes. He came in sight of "The Falls," and stopped.

"Whew!" he puffed. "Of course they're not as big as Niagara—except to the folks of Princetown; but by Heck! They're some falls after all. And, what's more, some live individual knows it. Bet he wasn't born in Princetown anyhow. This looks like business."

He leaned on the railing of a bridge and speculatively regarded the considerable manufacturing plant that was in full industry, saw that its prosperity was evidenced by some big new buildings under course of construction, and deliberated over a long white sign on top that read "Sayers Automobiles."

He rather objected to that sign. If he had designed it it would have been twice as high, twice as long and might have read "Sayers Automobiles, best on earth for the money. Cheapest at any price. No home complete without one."

He remembered that he had ridden in one a few days before and that it was what he called "nifty and nippy." In fact he had thought he

would like to have one—just a very small one to suit his purse, and had intended to ask what they cost. All his automobiling experience had been at the expense of his firm; but he had done quite a lot of riding. In fact the cashier had once asked him, sarcastically, whilst checking up his expense account, if he took an automobile to bed with him.

Jimmy got out his goggles, and visited the works. He was fascinated by the machinery, the noise, the way things were made. He wished that his line was automobiles instead of chocolates; but regretfully concluded that probably it took a long time to learn the patter, and how to run one, and that the only hopeless individual in the world was a candy drummer, because, "once a candy drummer always a candy drummer" was the proverb of the road.

A whistle blew and with a start he looked at his watch, scarcely believing it possible that he had passed the afternoon so quickly. He walked out through the big gates and started his homeward journey, and was surprised to realize that he was as tired as if he had done a heavy day's work. Absorbed in reflections concerning automobiles, and trade, he suddenly brought up with

a jerk and heard behind him a man jamming on the brakes of a car, and using several shining expletives. Jimmy made the jump of his life and got out of the road just in time.

"Gee Whizz!" he exclaimed. "If I've got to be run down by a taxi let it be on Broadway, not on a rube trail. Thank the Lord it wasn't a hay cart, because it'd have got me, sure!"

The motorist, looking back in exasperation, abruptly brought his car to a halt and turning half round in his seat shouted, "Sorry I missed you so close."

"Why, did you want to get me? It was close enough to suit me," replied Jimmy, recovering his grin.

"Of course I didn't know you were blind, sir. I'm very sorry," said the man.

"Why? Do you prefer to run down the blind ones?" queried Jimmy, coming abreast of the car and then laughing when he remembered that he was still wearing those ridiculous blue goggles. "I'm not blind. I just wear these for ornament. But it's all right, old chap. Don't you worry. I reckon I was so busy thinking that I didn't hear you coming at all. I get rather fond of myself when I think, which isn't often

enough so but that it surprises me to catch myself doing it. It's all right. No harm done."

The man surrendered to that entrancing smile and the glitter of exposed and perfect white teeth.

"Well the least I can do is to give you a lift, if you're going toward town," he said, with a return grin. "Get in, can't you?"

"Can't I? Watch me, as the drunk said when the policeman tapped him and told him he couldn't sleep sitting against a lamp post," and, grateful for conveyance, he climbed aboard. "It's the first time I ever won anything by missing anything," he said, laughing at his own paradox. "My feet are so sore from walking over these country roads that after this I'll never be able to look at a farm horse without tears in my eyes, and I'll take him by the hand and give the poor chap a box of corn salve. Phew! Pavements for mine. Do automobiles ever get sore feet out here?"

Jimmy learned that the driver was a foreman at the Sayers plant and was very enthusiastic about the merits of the car.

"It's not old enough or advertised enough to be well known yet," he said, "but she will be. I

know. Been in automobile factories all my life. Worked for some of the best of 'em. These are A-1. And Sayers is a live one. Fine old feller, too. That's his house up there on the hill. Some swell, eh?"

Jimmy looked up and saw a fine home that he had admired on his way out and had deduced that it belonged to the nabob of the town.

"I could do with it first rate," Jimmy assented. "All except the society stunt and that——" He concluded with a little cluck of his tongue.

The driver laughed.

"You don't know old Tom Sayers," he said. "Old Tom doing society stunts! Humph! He began as a machinist. Then got to be a designing engineer and now—well—there you are! Self-made man, Old Tom, and as fine as they make 'em. I don't reckon he'd care for a house as grand as that but you see he's married. Funny how some women first want to get married, then want their men to get rich, then instead of bein' satisfied get the society itch and after that are forever scratchin', ain't it? Mrs. Sayers spends about half her time in Europe. Schools here weren't good enough for her girl Margaret, so she took her over to some of those nunneries in

France and Switzerland, and goodness knows where. Gone some time now. Mighty pretty girl. But Old Tom? If you think he's ever gallivantin' anywhere except around his works, you ought to be up there loafin' some day when you think no one's about to see you! Old Tom can say things in five minutes that you don't have to learn by heart to remember the rest of your life. He works four hundred men now and he knows 'em all. Don't you doubt that!"

Jimmy, who was so keenly alive and imaginative that he was interested in nearly everything and everybody, looked back over his shoulder at the fine old remodeled colonial house on the hill with its broad sweep of lawns, its background of splendid trees, mountains in the distance, and the lively river at its feet, and, distinctly urban as he was, thought that if Mrs. Sayers knew when she was well off she'd stay at home.

"If I had a place like that with Maw in it—say sitting up there on the veranda, knitting—she's great on knitting, Maw is!—I reckon the show hasn't hit Broadway yet that could drag me out for a single night. No-sir-ee! Not if the whole chorus had chocolate legs!" he said to the foreman, who vociferously agreed.

"Beats the Dutch how some folks get everything, and others nothin'," he half grumbled.

"Cheer up, son!" said Jimmy. "You never get anything by envying somebody else. Why, look at me! I haven't even ever owned a runabout! And I'm not kicking! I like to see others have a lot of things I can't have myself, because it makes me glad to think that most likely they're happy owning things I'd like to have too, if I could afford 'em. By gosh! It's the finest feeling in the world to know that other folks are happy. Keeps you from feeling unhappy yourself. Makes it a mighty pleasant world for all of us. All the money I've got in the world, if made into cloth, wouldn't make me a patch if I had a hole in the seat of my pants as big as a postage stamp; but I don't lay awake nights grieving for fear I'll be pinched for indecent exposure. Not me! I just thank God the hole's not any bigger and keep plugging along, and I whistle while I plug. It helps. Plug & Whistle, I reckon, is the best firm on earth."

His benefactor had become so engrossed in his quaint passenger that the car was driven squarely up to the hotel door to let him out.

"Got any kids at home?" Jimmy asked, and on being told there were three, said cheerfully, "Wait a minute," and ran up the steps three at a time to return with a box of chocolates purloined from his samples.

"Take that to 'em," he said to the driver. "They're all right, I know. I'm a candy drummer. Good thing you've only got three because I couldn't spare a bigger box. My boss isn't a bad old chap, but he did ask me one time if I went on the road to sell candy or to give it away. The only man in the world I'd like to change jobs with is Santa Claus. Much obliged for the ride."

He loitered in the hotel lobby long enough to read a bill announcing that there would be a mass meeting that night in the "Grand Opera House" under the auspices of the Princetown Municipal Improvement League and then saw in big letters, that the meeting would be addressed by "His Honor, Judge J. Woodworth-Granger."

Jimmy had forgotten his rebuff, but now frowned a trifle at the recollection aroused by that name. He was entertained at supper by his sole fellow guest who sold machinery and hoped

to get an order from the Sayers' plant. And although the technical part was as foreign as Greek to Jimmy, he was mightily interested and wanted to know all about it. After dinner he sat alone on the veranda in front of the hotel and watched people coming down the drowsy, shaded street or loitering in the town square. There was nothing else to do. No theaters, cinema shows but three nights a week, and this an off night. Some wandering fireflies absorbed him for a while, and then they flew away, leaving him alone. Suddenly he dropped his chair from where it had been tilted back against the wall, and said, "Well, I reckon I'll have to go and hear what the judge has to say about improving this place. It needs it!" He found the Grand Opera House readily enough by following the slowly moving people who traveled in but one direction. Also he found on entering that there's not much in a name, its grandeur consisting of a lot of badly worn wooden seats, dingy painting, and some strips of jute carpet in the aisles that looked as if they had been collected after a cyclone. The stage was the bright spot, due to the decorations of flags, banners and bunting. Jimmy got a seat in the back row after

some difficulty. The Opera House was full, perhaps because there was no charge for admission, perhaps because there was no other place to go; but Jimmy charitably thought the town should be patted on the back for its interest in public improvements. Two girls played a duet on a piano and played it rather badly. And then there came in from the wings those who were to occupy the chairs on the stage. They entered as solemnly as if each was alone and about to recite Hamlet's soliloquy. Some of them threw out their chests and glared at the audience, others slunk in like harness makers visiting a lace factory. All were seated before there stalked in the counterpart of the drummer in the back row, and there was some evidence in the Judge's deportment that he had the dramatic sense to wait for a proper pause so that the spectators might see him in all his aloof magnificence. Had the two girls played "See the Conquering Hero Comes," he might have accepted it as befitting.

"Stranger here, ain'tchu?" Jimmy's neighbor, a dried up little old man, queried.

"Yes, why?" Jimmy mumbled back.

"Come to stay long?"

table in the forefront of the stage, buttoned his coat, shot his cuffs, and said "Ahem!" After that he took a long pause, carefully poured himself a glass of water, daintily wiped his lips with his pocket handkerchief, and in a louder tone said, "Ahem!"

"It's a mighty fine speech so far all right," commented Jimmy to the old man, who began excitedly, "You just wait! If he gets goin', I tell you——"

"S-s-sh" hissed someone in front of them, turning and glaring at the offender, and the conversationalist subsided and looked at Jimmy and glared and said, "S-s-sh!" as if the latter were the culprit.

"Friends and fellow citizens," said the Judge, condescendingly, "I esteem it a great honor to be called upon to address you to-night on a subject so near and dear to my heart as the welfare of this, my home city, the greatest city in the world as far as my affections can be bestowed. I have lived amongst you for nearly ten years ever since leaving the great universities beyond our borders, and I crave your indulgence for putting some of my larger views before you ere

I speak on purely local topics. Friends and fellow citizens, we must make the world free for democracy. Let freedom of the seas be that shining shibboleth which through its ulterior meaning, when considerately scrutinized to its utmost and ultimate, and defined as we Americans who are fully cognizant of our grave responsibilities toward humanity and the affairs of other nations, races, and peoples of this globe, which is round—those responsibilities handed down to us by the father of our country, George Washington—interpret as meaning that we wish freedom of the seas. Not in the abstract, but in the concrete, not in modicum but in unconditional unobstruction and under such international statutes and regulations as shall confine sea spaces to neither the individual, to the group, to those who live within certain prescribed boundaries which constitute government by the people for the people and of the people, nor yet again for any comity, compact, or treaty-tied group of nations. Small nations must be free by the exercises of their God-given processes of reasoning and power of thought to so constitute their affairs that they may, by their own ap-

proval and their own desires, succeed in securing that power of growth and expression which can come to a people solely and singularly when permitted the right of self-government."

"What's that?" whispered the old man, cupping his hand to his ear and looking a trifle bewildered.

"He means people ought to be allowed to govern themselves," explained Jimmy.

"Good Gawd! Did it take him all that time to say that?" questioned the old man.

"S-s-s-sh!" cautioned a highly impressed person in front, impatient lest he lose any of these obfuscated words of supposed wisdom.

"The way to be a good citizen is to be a good citizen," said the Judge impressively. "We learn by learning. The man who lives the longest is the oldest. All of us who do our best do our best. Our country is the home of the free and the brave, let us cherish its traditions. The best townsman is the man who does the best for his town. I can not stand before you to-night without feeling that the entire sentiment of the people is with me, my fellow citizens, and I should deem myself unworthy of addressing you here to-night, upon this platform, did I not

make it plain to you, or as plainly as I can, that I consider myself as one of those in the vanguard of that high and lofty motive whose purity of purpose none dare assail, municipal improvements!"

In the tumultous burst of applause that followed the old man croaked to Jimmy, "What was that he said?"

"He says he's for the band stand," Jimmy interpreted with great brevity. "That is, that's the way I understand it. Maybe that's not exactly what he means. It takes a lot of hard thinking and consideration to find out what some men really do mean when they talk."

"To hell with the band stand. I been here forty year and we got along all right without it, say I! If that's what he's talkin' about, I'm goin' home. I understood it was somethin' about taxes we was to hear. They got me taxed plumb out of my socks and——"

"S-s-sh!" cautioned those in the vicinity.

"And if they tax us for this I can't have any underwear at all! Lemme outer this. I'm goin'!" said the veteran and Jimmy was compelled to stand up to let him pass, and then, thinking this an excellent opportunity to escape,

himself fled. The Judge was still uttering profound nothings when his last words were audible, and that proved that he was a great and blossoming statesman for whom no dignity was too high!

CHAPTER II

JIMMY found the train all that he had anticipated, and then some; but being one of that fortunate cult who arise happily, sing in bathrooms to the annoyance of neighbors who waken with a grouch, enjoy breakfast, and tackle each day as if it were certain to be filled with sunshine, soon found the position entertaining. Although he knew nothing at all about the subject, he even indulged in a learned discussion on cattle with his seat mate, and held his own until he suggested that if milch cows were put in nice comfortable homes and liberally fed with condensed cream mixed with flour paste they would give pure cream instead of pure milk.

The farmer stared at Jimmy wondering whether he was seated with an insane man or not, and if so whether the latter might develop homicidal mania.

"I've always believed that cows were badly treated," Jimmy explained very soberly. "Their

esthetic development isn't looked after properly. Now milk ought to be rich, creamy, sweet, and fragrant. Feed a cow on onions and her milk smells like onions, doesn't it?"

The farmer admitted that it did.

"Well then, here's an idea you could make a fortune out of. By Jove! I don't believe it's ever been tried! Why not raise flowers on a dairy farm. Pick out cows with naturally sweet and kindly dispositions. Make nature fit nature. For instance, take a nice red cow and feed her on red roses. Nothing but red roses. Her milk is specially bottled and sold as rose milk. By and by, maybe, its color would be a beautiful red. It would smell like red roses. White cows should have lilacs and lilies of the valley. Yellow cows ought to be fed on daisies and such. Think of the advertising possibilities. 'Try our Rose milk, or Lily of the Valley milk or Daisy milk.' And say, what's the matter with feeding violets to blue cows? Violet brand would of course be the favorite for blonde women, and Rose milk for the brunettes. Make the cow's home surroundings lovely. Don't shut her up in a filthy stall but give her a room, and a nice bed, and pictures on the wall so she can have

something to look at besides the doggoned scenery she has to see during working hours, when she's busy making milk and wishing the whistle would blow so she could lay off her overalls and go home to her family. Cows, I tell you, are——"

He turned towards his seat mate to find a vacant space and to discover a man with wild eyes and hasty furtiveness making his way toward the door of the other compartment, as if seeking safety.

"Well what do you think of that!" exclaimed Jimmy, sotto voice. "Confound it. It's the darned farmers that need educating; not the cows. I swear I believe cows have more sense of humor than some men. And I was just beginning to get good, too!"

And then, chuckling, he consulted his watch, and began leisurely collecting his belongings.

All his leisureliness vanished, however, from the moment when he issued from his hotel, and he became as brisk and busy as a cricket intent on ravaging an entire wheat field in a series of swift swoops.

"You seem to be in a mighty big hurry, Jim,"

complained one customer, later in the day, "What's the rush?"

Jimmy, mopping his forehead, for the first time appeared a trifle diffident, flushed like a school boy and then blurted, "Well, to tell the honest truth I am in a hurry. I'm trying to clean up and catch the six-thirty train east. You see—I don't know as there is anything to be ashamed of—I've got to get home to my mother."

Observing that this statement provoked no ridicule, he expanded.

"I suppose I've got as fine a mother as ever lived. She's down in Baltimore and she's due to have a birthday in just three days, and—you know, I've been with Maw on her birthday ever since she was born! That is—I mean ever since I was born. No sir-e-ee! Never missed once. We always looked forward to it, Maw and I do. Seems as if it was just our day, and nobody else's at all! Maybe it's more important to her because it happens to be my birthday too. I go home because I want to be with her on her birthday, I reckon, and she likes to have me come home because it's mine. So, come rain or shine, loss of business or train wrecks, I'm home on

that day, and—and the minute I step inside the front door, I'm—I'm just a kid again."

Two days later there leapt up the cement steps of a neat old-fashioned house in the suburbs of Baltimore a man who had come home to "feel like a kid again," and with a shout bolted inside to be received by a gentle gray-haired woman whom he picked up in his arms and kissed with boyish demonstrativeness.

"By Gosh, Maw! You're looking younger and prettier, every time I see you!" he exclaimed, holding her off at arm's length and studying her solicitously. "I never see you without wishing I could stay here all the time—just you and me. All alone! Just we two."

"Jims," she said, using an old pet name, "you'll get over that sometime. And—it's about time, too, isn't it, that you stopped courting your own mother, and began to remember that you're grown up. You will be thirty-four years old to-morrow and I shall be——"

"Twenty-four! Always twenty-four."

"Sixty-four!"

"Twenty-four! Don't I know? Haven't I kept count?"

"I can keep my own count. Sixty-four. I

hope you didn't bring me another foolish thing for a birthday present. I always think of that hat!" And she lifted her fine chin and laughed amusedly.

"That hat," Jimmy expostulated, "was bought in the best shop on Fifth avenue and the girl that sold it to me put it on to show me how well it looked."

"It must have been the girl rather than the hat that hypnotized you into paying fifty dollars for something that would look better on someone of about sixteen rather than sixty."

Jimmy did not appear to take the joke in his usual good tolerance but soberly insisted that the hat was "A peach."

"No, the trouble with you is, Maw, that you don't realize how young you look, and how handsome you are. It's not my fault you look like twenty, is it? I told that lady hat drummer that I was going to give the hat to somebody that was a darned sight better looking than she was, and she said 'How old is the lady?' and I told her I wasn't discussing a horse and that the age was none of her business, but that if she'd think of someone who looked twenty, and get me a hat that would be the best in the shebang in the

twenty-year-old class, and tell me the price and——"

"Well, Jims, don't you mind what I say," she interrupted with a smile. "You are a good son, though terribly extravagant. You bought seal-skin furs that I can't wear, and a grand piano on which I can't play. But——" and she went over and put her hands on his shoulders and looked into his eyes with ineffable fondness—"Jims, what you gave didn't matter because I knew that your heart, all of it, was there in the gift! And often, when you are away, I thank God for giving me a son so unselfish, so loyal, so thoughtful, so true!"

There were many of Jim Gollop's customers who would scarcely have known him then; for there was a strange softening and adoration of his rugged face, quite as if beneath that careless, half-cynical, humorous mask there dwelt, abashed, seldom visible, some great tenderness of soul that now issued forth without reserve. He bent forward with a sudden reverence, very gently, with shining eyes, and then, folding her still more gently to his arms, kissed her white hair, and for a moment held her very close.

"Well, Jims," she said at last, slowly dis-

engaging herself, "your room is just as you left it. No—not quite. I take it back. We had to remove your discarded shoes from the bed where you left them, and I think you left one slipper in the bath room and the other in the grate. Also some collars on the floor, some more scattered over the dresser, and a rather smelly pipe on a chair. Otherwise it's ready for you and Bessie has by this time drawn your bath, and——"

"I'm mighty glad about that pipe! I thought I'd lost it somewhere between Plattsburg and Buffalo. Funny, isn't it, how you become fond of a particular pipe? I always liked that one. This is a real home coming! You see that pipe was given to me by Billy Baker. I've told you about Billy, haven't I? He's the chap that lives down in Greenville, Pennsylvania, who used to make the same ground I did, and sold that Flor-odora line. Poor chap! Married now. Got a kid he calls Arture Davis Baker! Now if he'd called that kid Jim——"

"It might have been as foolish as you! Hurry and come down stairs. We have chicken Maryland, oysters out of season, and corn cakes, and—don't moon about the bath room and try to sing, Jims!" His mother thrust him towards the

stairs and as he ascended like a bell boy expecting a tip, watched him from sight.

Jimmy paused to look through his open window of his room at a big elm whose branches he could almost touch. "Hello Bill, old feller. Glad to see you looking well. How's the birds' nest business this summer? Oh. Got a dozen aboard have you, and you say mostly robins? Well, well, well! That's good! Tell 'em to sing to me at six o'clock to-morrow morning, will you? Thanks!"

He smiled fondly at the lawns and homely flower beds in the rear and thrust his head far out of the window to estimate the growth of a creeper that he had planted with his own hands. It seemed to him that there was no home, anywhere, as homelike as this old-fashioned house that since the death of his father he had gradually modernized inside to suit his tastes, despite his mother's protests against his extravagance. He rarely thought of those hard years following the death of his father, when the home was learned to be the sole remaining asset of what had been regarded as a fine prosperity; of how he had insisted on its retention; of how he had been compelled to work out of school hours; of

his and his mother's reluctant surrender of the cherished dream that he might go through Yale; of how, long after he had found employment to support his mother, he had doggedly insisted on night study to complete his education following the foolish traditions of nearly every old Southern family that its male members must have a profession. Sometimes he remembered how reluctantly he had abandoned his dream of becoming a lawyer because he could not afford to let an opening "on the road" at a good salary pass by; but he was secretly proud of the fact that he had bravely concealed all the disappointment.

"My mother, our home, a few good friends, a little more in the bank at the end of each year and something each day to give me a laugh. What more could a man wish!" This had become his creed and he lived up to it in all ways, even if he had to create the laugh for his own amusement. He had gradually learned the hard lesson that a wise man cuts his suit to fit the cloth at his disposal and was thereby content. He had learned to lose with a grin and win without a boast.

Mr. James Gollop, despite his unserious de-

meanor when abroad, never departed from his home to resume his never ending circle "on the road" without a sigh. It was so on the day when, his birthday holiday over, he tripped down the steps throwing a parting joke over his shoulder at his mother, and hastened to the end of the quiet residential street to board a street car; but in the street car and later, in the train, he sat soberly thinking and wondering if there was no way on earth by which he could be at home each day.

"Maw's not getting any younger," he thought to himself. "Every day I'm not with her is one day less on my account that I can never catch up. And all accounts sometimes come to an end when the Big Auditor decides it's time to close them."

He threw off his brooding when he reached New York, and was the old, alert, bubbling Jimmy when he reached his firm's headquarters, where he was prepared to wrangle with the auditor over items on his expense list, demand better samples than the last lot, suggest some special cartoons for a special trade, cajole the house in sending out some special souvenirs for some special customers, and find out from the

credit man what he thought of Jones Jobbing Co. for a little larger order. And then, all these affairs adjusted diplomatically, he went out to make some personal purchases. He was reflecting on the fact that everybody in New York seemed in a hurry to get to some place or another when he was arrested by a cheerful voice so evidently aimed in his direction that he looked up with a start; a rich voice that said, "Well for goodness sake! Fancy seeing you here; but of course that is foolish, because I know you have to come here on business at long intervals. How are you?"

"Very well, thank you," said Jimmy, accepting the proffered hand and shaking it warmly, but at the same time mentally perturbed because he could not think of the charming young lady's name, nor whence she came. "And I am somewhat surprised to meet you here, too."

"Oh, Mother had to come to do a lot of silly things and dragged me along to chaperone her, I suppose," said the girl with a laugh that exposed teeth fascinatingly small, white and regular, between lips fascinatingly generous and well formed. "And what is more, I hate New York and like the country, and—I'm bored stiff

with tagging around into millineries, and shops, and such. I can get enough of shops at home!"

"Of course! Of course!" agreed Jimmy affably, but feeling himself a little pompous through his failure to remember where such a charming creature dealt out chocolates when on her job. His mind was working like lightning and speculated, "Plague on it all! They look so different in their go-away-duds from what they do behind the counters with nice white aprons and nice little white caps and nice white linen gloves and—why can't I remember!—Where does she work? She's familiar but—ummh!—It never does to let 'em think you've forgotten 'em, because they resent it and knock your sales when you come around again. Isn't she the manageress at Bodley's out in Cincinnati? No-o—I think—I think she's at the Bijou in Pittsburgh. Ummmh! It's up to me to make her believe I've been thinking about her ever since I sold her place my last order."

Aloud he said, "Well you're no more bored stiff than I am. And I, too, only come to New York because I have to. Which way are you going?"

"Nowhere in particular just now," she said,

"except to look in that shop window up there. Are you interested in windows?"

"If they've got chocolates in them," he replied with a wry grin, and she laughed.

"Chocolates? I detest them!" she exclaimed, and Jimmy knew just how she must feel about chocolates when all day long she saw people buying them, and sometimes gobbling them.

They looked in the window and Jimmy was glad that it was a leather show that had not only gloves and knickknacks but some good horse furniture as well. His companion seemed to know all about saddlery and went into raptures over a pigskin creation; but with a sigh, remarked that she didn't feel able to afford it, and they explored farther. She kept Jimmy too busy mentally to permit even his agile mind to indulge in continued speculations as to her identity. He knew that his first duty was to prove entertaining, and in some distress as to what might be the best tack, suddenly took advantage of a sandwich man's conspicuous overcoat that read, "The Marvelous Age. Matinee to-day. Royalty Theater."

"Oh, I'd love to see that!" exclaimed his companion, and that gave him his cue.

"Off we go then," he said.

"What? You take me to a theater without a chaperone? I'm astonished!" And then she laughed as if highly amused by something extraordinary.

"Mabel," he said, gravely, "you don't know me when I'm in New York. It's the matinee for ours."

"The 'Mabel' settles it," she declared mischievously, and went with him gayly down the cross street leading to the theater.

Dexterously as he fished to glean from her where she worked when at home, he was still ignorant of that important point when, the performance over, they emerged into the street.

"Now," she said, "you can leave me at the Holland House. That is, unless you wish to come up and pay your respects to Mother; but come to think of it, she may not be home yet."

"No," said Jimmy, in perplexity, "I have an appointment. You must extend my respects and good wishes. But—say! There's the big Horse Show on in Madison Square Garden to-morrow afternoon. Can't we see that? If you will but say 'yes,' I'll book seats for your mother, and for you, and for me. How about it?"

"Get Mother to a Horse Show? Heavens! But—I'd like to go." She spoke with bright wistfulness that absolutely finished him.

"Well, your mother will let you, won't she?" he asked hopefully.

"Let me see," she said thoughtfully as they stood in the hotel entrance, and drew from her bag a tiny silver mounted appointment book and consulted its pages. "Oh, goody! Mamma has an appointment up town that I can easily beg off from. Yes. Do get two tickets and we'll go."

"I'll call here for you at two o'clock," said Jimmy. "Will that do?"

"Excellently. But, mind you, no box! I like to see a horse show from close down to the ground. They don't look so dressed up and silly as they do from the boxes. I rather suspect that the horses don't like those in the boxes," she said with a smile.

"Agreed," he answered, and made his devoirs.

He walked briskly as far as the corner, then turned and looked back to make certain that she had disappeared. He hastened back, intent on gaining the desk before others had reached it, but found himself too late. He was compelled

to bide his time whilst several people registered, and then sidled up to the desk. A very haughty young man swung the register toward him but he ignored it and, leaning confidentially across, said, "There's a young lady and her mother stopping here and I can't remember their names. Perhaps you could tell me what——"

"Sorry! There are probably fifty young ladies and their mothers stopping here," said the hotel clerk, icily. "If you're on the square in asking for such information, I'm sorry I can't give it; but if you've got some lay of your own, you're in the wrong nest. This isn't the Sports Half-way House, you know."

"But see here. I'm in earnest about this, you know, and——" began Jimmy, and was interrupted with a curt "Sorry! Nothing doing!"

He might have argued the point had not there been another interruption and after a moment he left, shrugging his shoulders a trifle, and condemning himself as an ass for his failure to remember who this "Mabel" was. The failure rendered him doubly keen, for it was a part of his business training, self-imposed, to remember names and faces. He went to his own hotel and for an hour ran through the pages of his blue

book. It was a peculiar creation of his own. It was strictly private. It contained details concerning customers. It was like a highly developed "Who's Who," diary in his trade and made interesting reading.

"Barclay, James W. 1142 Chestnut, Philadelphia. Credit AAA1. Rather stiff. Likes to be Mistered. Teetotaler. Chief entertainment, Y. M. C. A. lectures. Home mission movements and prayer meetings. Hot stuff on religion. Show him the Zoo. P. S. Five children, all girls, oldest named Martha. P. S. On Oct. 14 youngest kid, Ruth, suffering from the flu. Note—don't forget mention it when next see him and express hope she has recovered satisfactorily.

"Barnes, Thomas R. 1627A La Salle St., Chicago. Credit fair. Called 'Tommy.' Red hot sport. Horseraces. Prize fights. Poker. (Go easy on stakes because unless careful will boost the comein.) Likes Pommery Sec. P. S. Likes chorus girls. P. S. Dangerous josher when loaded. P. S. When he expresses desire to spend quiet evening skidoo. P. S. Oct. 27th—Bailed Tommy out for hitting a policeman. Policeman not much hurt, Tommy a wreck. P. S. Jan.

15th, sent bell boy 3 a. m. to my room to borrow fifty bucks. P. S. Jan 17—Tommy paid the fifty. P. S. Jan 19, got Tommy off on Century Limited, and separated him from girl named Lulu. P. S. Feb 1, letter from Tommy thanking me for separating him from girl named Lulu.

"Coldwell, Henry J.; Mgr. Fountain Conf. Co., Savannah. Credit A1. Likes a decent show. No legs. Moony about wife and family when away from home. Spiritualist. Wife a blonde who likes to think she's reforming lower classes. Grandfather old cuss named Poindexter who was defeated for Congress by but seventeen votes. P. S. Nov. 5, great grandmother a Fairfax of which very proud. P. S. Dec. 7, great great grandmother a Lee. P. S. Jan. 15, great aunt a Washington. P. S. Feb. 4, great grandmother danced with Lafayette. Mar. 15, brought ugly old painting of joker in wig and stock at second-hand shop Bowery and expressed to H. J. C., with note that was assured this was portrait of ancestor. Total cost $1.15, charged exs. Mar. 23—Enthusiastic letter thanks from J. H. C. in which says exactly like miniature portrait in possession his aunt and no doubt of its authenticity. Mar. 28, got biggest

order ever received from J. H. C. Hope cr. man will O. K. it."

There were some names and records in this interesting book that dealt with employees. For instance:

"Bangs, Reginald, 1 R Mohawk St., Buffalo. AA1. Sentimental cuss. Quotes poetry. Thinks has artistic temperament. Not much business head. Place made a success by head clerk, Miss Norah Cahill, who runs it and him as well. Play Norah to win, for first, second, and place. P. S. Jan. 13, gifts and hot air wasted on Norah and no good. Got to have the goods and the prices. P. S. Mar. 4, Cahill nearly scalped me over seventeen cents difference in accts. LOOK OUT FOR THE LOCOMOTIVE when dealing with this Cahill person. P. S. Cahill can be influenced by clerk named Mary Mooney. $1.50 Dr. Exs. flowers for Mooney."

In nearly all cases where clerks or counter girls had influence on orders, their names and foibles and identifications were carefully registered as they were learned; and these were scattered through as appurtenances to the different shops. "Mary Smith. Red-headed. Does hair

up like a Hottentot. Jingles with bangles and is color blind"; or "Chief salesgirl Freda Isenheimer. Nose like prow of ship. Warts on her neck, grin like a cellar door, teeth like an old horse. Flaps hands when talks. Voice like saw mill and waddles like a duck lost on a desert." And "Jenny Gray. All peach. Goo-goo blue eyes. About thirteen hands high and chestnut in color. Well-gaited and has boss under thumb." But although Jimmy carefully read all these and pondered each, he was still uncertain regarding whither the name or place of the young lady he was to entertain at the horse show. And, the most annoying part of it all was that he, confirmed bachelor, suffered from an unwonted sense of liking for this same girl. Her conversation seemed to him peculiarly bright and entertaining. She looked so much more attractive than any other girl he had ever entertained. There was something about her face, and the line of her throat that he had discovered while surreptitiously studying her there in the half darkness of the theater that was so much more graceful, so much more refined, so much more beautiful than he had ever observed in any other girl. It began to seem difficult to believe that he

could ever before have seen her, and yet failed to note such a combination of charms. He thought he must have been blind as a bat when he passed her by; but again he fell back on the excuse that a girl in a shop uniform was an entirely different appearing person from the same girl out on a holiday. He did not at all realize that his interest in this unidentified queen of chocolates was becoming less and less of a business nature until he finally blurted in desperation, "I don't give a cuss where she peddles the sweets; but by gosh! I've just got to learn her name and address because—Oh, hang it! Because!"

CHAPTER III

JIMMY GOLLOP, like most commercial travelers of the first flight, not only knew how to wear clothes but what clothes to wear. And on this day of days paid particular care to his appearance. He rather anticipated that the candy girl would appear in some plain, tailormade gown. Her hair, one of her chief charms of personal appearance, was heavy and beautiful, and of a most baffling shade of color that shone brown in darker shadows and yet in full light glinted as if subtly suggesting gold. Jimmy, who had a natural sense for color, pondered over this and decided that the tailormade would be of navy blue and that therefore violets would be the correct thing in the flower line to show his appreciation.

"But how in the deuce am I to send them up to her hotel when I don't even know her name!" he thought.

However, he was sufficiently independent to

buy the finest violets he could find and to appear at the hotel entrance with them in his hand. The young lady was not there. Jimmy tried to appear unconcerned, and for a time stood like a rather modern statue of "Cupid bearing flowers." Now and then he peered into the hotel lobby and it seemed to him that whenever he did so the human icicle behind the desk was glaring in his direction as if contemplating a call for the police, or sending a message to the Ladies' Protective Association for Attractive Young Females.

At last when he was becoming fidgety and consulting his watch at intervals of not longer than three minutes, the girl appeared.

"Well, in the name of common sense," she demanded, "why didn't you send your card up, or have the desk call me? I hope you're not in the habit of expecting young ladies to meet you on the corner. I waited and waited, and then was just about to——" She stopped at sight of his lugubrious face, relented, and laughed. "Never mind! Don't take it to heart, and—are those violets for me? You are a dear, after all! I love them." She took them from his outstretched hand and buried her face in them,

whilst he, usually so nimble of tongue and ready of word, was striving to overcome this alarming confusion and embarrassment that rendered him about as quick of wit as a soft-shelled clam. In fact, he felt like a jelly fish save that he was twice as incompetent.

"You see," he began lamely, "I didn't quite know what to do. I was afraid that maybe your mother had objected to your going to the horse show, and——"

"Why, you're not afraid of her, are you? You never seemed so before. I thought—I thought you and she were rather good friends." There was a vague tinge of sarcasm in her words and tone but like a wobbly legged pup trying to catch a butterfly he mentally leaped at this offering and began cudgeling his memory in quest of women who ran chocolate shops. Could it be that she was the daughter of the widow Haynes who owned the Bon-Ton in Detroit? Impossible! The widow was not more than thirty. Maybe Mrs. Harris of Miami? No, if Mrs. Harris had a daughter she would have that unmistakable Southern peculiarity of speech. This girl was from somewhere farther north. It couldn't be that she was the daughter of Mrs.

Schumann of Milwaukee? Heaven forbid! For Mrs. Schumann was so fat she shook like an unsupported pyramid of blanc-mange whenever she moved.

"I had hopes for you yesterday," a voice aroused him from his lapse. "You acted as if you could talk when you turned loose; but now you're back in your old hopeless form. Come on! Wake up! Oh, I forgot to tell you the great news. Like to hear it?"

"I like to hear you say anything," said Jimmy, hopelessly at her mercy and speaking the truth, and nothing but the truth so help him Bob! and glancing at her with that unmistakable sick-calf expression that seems to be the inevitable accomplishment of all lovers, and that the original Eve must have noticed in the eyes of Adam as he stood lolling around Eden in his red flannel underwear.

"Mamma got an invitation to spend the winter down in St. Augustine with the Charles K. Wilmarths, and she knows I hate them. She wanted to go because, as you know, she thinks she's not at all well, and also because the Charles K. Wilmarths are rather swagger. Either because she wished to get rid of me, or because I raised such

a fuss, she compromised. I'm to be allowed to stay here for the next four months and take painting lessons from Jorgensen. I intend to have a studio of my own. I'm to live at the Martha Putnam hotel, which, as you know, never, never allows a man farther through its doors than the waiting room. Happy? I'm so happy I could shout!"

"Then you've no longer any interest in the business?" inquired Jimmy, for the want of something better to say.

She looked out of the taxi-window for an instant, as if recalling something and then said, slowly, "Yes, to tell the truth I have. It means so much. I'll admit that I'm more or less a business person. I like to see things grow bigger and bigger, and sell more and more, and get to mean something. Not that the dollars and cents count so much, after a time, but because a name somehow becomes a standard. Yes, I shall miss what you call the business; but, after all, it will not stop because I'm not there to enthuse over it, and——" She interrupted herself with a half-suppressed laugh— "Mother doesn't look at things exactly as I do. She detests it and is ashamed of it, I have an ideal!"

Jimmy never quite idealized the chocolate trade before; but there was something rather fine in what she said, he thought. After all, maybe it was one form of Americanism that she had voiced, and it became a trifle nobler when he considered that it meant industry, energy, and honesty. To do something and do it well. To be proud of doing something well. To be proud that one wasn't a loafer or a drone, or a parasite on the body economic. He was striving to correlate all this when made aware that the taxi had stopped and that they were at their destination. He actually submitted to an overcharge of a half-dollar inflicted by the hatchet-faced brigand who had jerked his taxi-meter over with a bang before his fares had time to inspect it. And then, resolving to forget everything save the fact that they were entering the Horse Show, and that he was somehow treading in ether because he had found a girl who was different from all others, he became himself again.

"We're not so very late after all," he exclaimed as he glanced up at the big tower clock. "I thought I waited an hour for you. But, anyhow, here we are, and now for it!"

They sauntered in and he was proud to

observe that many eyes were turned in the direction of his companion. It made him feel rather egotistical, for there were many girls there well worth looking at, and people don't always go to horse shows to look at horses. Jimmy forgot all about chocolates. Unconsciously he relapsed to his habitual self, and, inasmuch as most any one who is unassuming and entirely natural is entertaining, seemed to keep his companion happy.

"I like it all," she said, in an interval. "I like to look at those in the boxes who came here for nothing else than to be looked at. It makes them happy to see others looking at them. I suppose they must feel for the moment that they are as good as the horses. Some people will make mistakes of that sort, you know, and never learn the truth. And I like the horses for themselves. They are so unlike. So like people. Some of them are shy, some of them nervous, some of them conceited, and others are as self-satisfied as if already they had won the blue ribbons. Funny, isn't it, that I never suspected that you had any interest at all in them?"

"Well, you see," said Jimmy. "We never had much of a chance to understand really what

either of us enjoys or dislikes before we met here. It makes a lot of difference when, how and where people meet. I suppose you'll laugh if I tell you when I first fell in love, because it was with a horse. Honestly, it was! I'm in earnest about it. Things didn't come any too easy around our house—I mean Maw's and mine —after my father died. Somehow his death sort of changed me from a boy into a man, and, —well, I just couldn't think of enough ways to keep her from wanting anything. I felt as if I'd have to be a man big enough to fill my father's place and to take care of her. There wasn't a way to make a penny that I didn't consider just on her account. And I got a job after school hours delivering stuff for a grocery store, down in our town. I had to care for and drive a poor old feller with the string halt, and spavins, and I used to wonder why I couldn't get his tail to grow longer. Honestly, I thought all horses' tails were about eight inches long until an old horse trader looked my friend over one day and said, 'Hello! That nag's been docked sometime! He didn't always pull a grocery cart. Shouldn't wonder if there'd been some class and pedigree to him sometime.' Then he had the imper-

tinence to stick his dirty fingers into my friend's mouth and hoist his upper lip and say, 'Methusalem was old, but this plug could make him look like a suckling.' I remember that I was angry, and that I wished that my friend had bitten him. I'd have done it myself if I had been big enough, or a horse. You see, I was proud of that horse, and liked him, and he loved me. As a joke the hostlers down at the boarding stable where we kept him called him Bovolarapus; but I called him Bo for short, because it didn't seem fair that we shouldn't be familiar with each other. I'm sure he thought of me as Jim for short; so I called him Bo. He used to take a kick at anybody else who came near him, but I could put a hot iron on his poor old heels without a single vicious jerk from him. He bit nearly everyone who got too close or too curious, but he'd put his lips up to my cheek and kiss me when something had hurt my feelings, and I'd get into some quiet lane and tell him all about it—sometimes with my arms around his tired old neck! I tell you he was mighty comforting to me when everything went wrong. You won't believe it, but I used to fancy that sometimes he tried to whisper

into my ear and that he said, 'Take it quietly, boy! Just do the best you can. I know that sometimes the hill is terribly hard to climb, and bitterly long, but somewhere there is always a top. Don't think of the load, the whip, or the hill, but keep thinking, always, of what it's like on top. Many times they'll hurt you when you're doing your best, because they're cruel, or don't understand. But most of those who drive you—and someone or something must drive you as long as you live,—don't really mean to be hard. It's merely because they don't understand. Sometimes you'll be very tired, and out of breath, and the sweat of hard work will drip and trickle from your ears down over your eyes, and you'll think that another yard is beyond all you can do. But keep on! Stick it! You can always do a little more than you think you can if you've the courage to try. And there's always a top to every hill, lad! It's only up there that you can breathe, and that the load is light, and that there is rest!' "

A band that had been playing off up in the balcony at the far end stopped, as if waiting for the next event, and abruptly aware that he had said so much, and surprised by his own un-

measured loquacity, he, too, stopped, abashed, and for the first time in his speech looked at her and met her eyes. They were soft, filled with wonder, absorbed. He could not have defined why he was so swiftly ashamed of thus openly flouting that boyhood heart of his upon his sleeve. He could not have explained what strange lapse had overpowered him to thus unbosom long forgotten things. He looked away from her toward the entrance. Men were bringing tall hurdles outward to place them in the arena. The jumpers were coming for exhibit.

"But," she insisted breathlessly, leaning toward him, and her hushed voice sounding distinct from all the murmur surrounding them, "Tell me the rest of it!"

"Tell you the rest of it? There's nothing more to tell! Nothing except—except——" He hesitated, then laughed as if in self-derision. "My friend fell down one day, half way up a hill. The top was there, just above him. The top for which he had so valiantly tried. I, a boy, his only friend, got his tired old head up on my knees and cried. A policeman came and shook his head and went away and phoned. A vet came and said, 'The best thing to do is to

shoot him,' and then the policeman pulled out a gun, and went toward Bo's head and bent over the brave and tired old eyes of my friend, and—I fought! Fought so hard that they had to give us a chance, Bo and me. They laughed, but the vet phoned my employers and what they said, I never knew; but I do know that they gave me my friend, and that about midnight I got him home, weak and tottering, and put him out in our back garden, and told Maw all about it. I thought she would understand and she did. She understands everything. Everything! No one else ever could. And so—um-m-mh! Bovolarapus was the first horse I ever owned and the last. We had to go without some few things, Maw and I, to pay pasturage for a year or two until he died, but it doesn't at all matter now. You see he was a sort of inspiration to me because he told me so many things, and—that somewhere, a long way I fear from where I've ever reached, there's a top to the hill. He taught me that be we driver or driven there's a heart of things that has to be learned. That the driver may learn from the driven and that there is always the promise that the driven may drive. And so may God pity the man who thinks that

he can drive his world alone, because, as far as I can dope it out, everything in life is made up of give if you would take, and take only when you give. I may be wrong. One never knows. That's the pity of it all. But that's the way it looks to me, and—that's the way communing with a poor old horse taught me, the only game I try to play. It's only when we've lost the true sense of things that we say 'Life's nothing but a horse show—after all!' "

Staring at the arena, and bringing his thoughts back to their surroundings, he waited for her to speak; but for the moment they seemed fixed in a little oasis of silence, embodying but them alone. It was the girl who broke the peculiar stillness.

"I—I—never thought you were like that," she said, almost as if soliloquizing. "I thought you were out for yourself and nothing else! I didn't in the least think you could ever feel anything beyond yourself. You humiliate me—in a way—my stupidity! And I feel like apologizing for my past unkindness, because I didn't, as you say—because I didn't at all understand!"

He couldn't quite grasp it all, although her every word had been audible and distinct. To

what did she refer? "Past unkindness?" He strove to think when she had been unkind to him and where. The baffling sense of having forgotten something he should have remembered, again disturbed him and drove him to jest.

"Don't say that!" he cried in pretended alarm. "You make me feel like the coon who was sentenced for stealing chickens when the judge said, 'You are incorrigible. This is the twenty-seventh time we've had you up for this heinous, fearsome crime. But now you have gone the limit! You stole two black hens on the night of April seventh.' Then he stopped and glared at the nigger who leaned over the dock rail, hopefully, yet frightened, and said, 'I think you should be sentenced to ninety-nine years in the penitentiary!' And the nigger thought it over and looked at the judge, then around the court and gasped, and said, 'Jedge, sah! I thank my Gawd them chickens was black. It must have been the color, sah, that made you so kind, because I reckon if they'd been white you'd have sure had me hanged!' "

But she did not seem to accept it as a joke.

"I have been unkind," she said, with a shake of her head. "I had no idea you could be like

—well—like you are. So there! And besides, I don't like to be made fun of."

"I'm not making fun of you," he declared. "I'm making fun of myself. I can't help it. I've a sense of proportion. I know what a mut I am better than anyone else does. It does me good to admit it whenever I get a proper chance."

For another interval she studied him, curiously, looked away, and again turned toward him as if still unconvinced of something, and then said, "Well, if you were wise, you would keep on being just yourself. You've something to learn from horses yet. I believe they are always natural, and unassuming, and sincere. That's a beautiful animal there now, isn't it? Well done! What a jump! Seven bars! That's pretty good for a practice take-off, I should say. What do you think?"

"I'd jump higher than that to remember something I've forgotten," Jim murmured; but his remark went unchallenged, due to a second splendid leap in the arena that was so swift and graceful that it resembled nothing so much as a glistening bay flash, a compound of splendidly correlated muscle, nerve and sinew, and the

spectators burst into a storm of applause as the horse, proudly and daintily stepping on springing hocks, lifted a beautiful head, pricked sensitive ears, and stared through big, intelligent eyes at the boxes.

Even the perplexed and infatuated Jimmy forgot his secret questionings and gave himself up to the joys of the display. Event followed event in such rapid succession that he was astonished when the military band struck up its dispersing air, and he and his companion "The Candy Girl" as he had come to think of her, were caught into the leisurely maelstrom that surged slowly toward the exits. He had even forgotten the fact that he had as yet failed to learn his companion's name; but at the hotel entrance maneuvered for another chance.

"Isn't it possible to induce you and your mother to see a show, or hear a concert, or something of that sort to-night?" he asked wistfully.

"I wish we could," she said; "but I'm afraid it's quite impossible. We are dining with some friends."

"What about to-morrow, then?" he insisted, somewhat crestfallen.

"To-morrow we are going to visit some rela-

tives in Connecticut where we shall spend the week-end."

His face, usually so cheerful and optimistic, might have competently served for an artist's study of "Gloom." He felt as if the props had been kicked from beneath a line on which swung all his best linen.

"I've got to get back to my work not later than day after to-morrow," he lamented. "In fact I ought to take the five o'clock flyer west to-morrow afternoon to keep up with my dates. I've sent out my cards that I am coming."

"Then for goodness sake, go!" she insisted. "I'll see you at home—no—I forgot. I shall not be there for weeks, or perhaps months. I mustn't let this Jorgensen opportunity go to waste. I'm very keen on it. But you will be in town again and must come and call for me at the Martha Putnam. I shall—I shall look forward to it!"

She suddenly flushed as if she had somehow committed herself, and before he could reply had almost run from him into the hotel lobby. But he had caught a look in her eyes that caused his heart to lose a beat, then to thump like a bass drum in martial band. He was made suddenly

aware that he was gawking after her with his mouth hanging open and his eyes bulging, by the delighted snickers of a pair of impertinent door boys and the suppressed comment of one, "Betchu a nickel she's thrown him down! Gee! Ain't he got it bad!"

And Jimmy, turning away with a heavy-villain air of dignity, was ashamed of himself because he had blushed profusely in sight of two mere urchins in brass buttons.

CHAPTER IV

"I SUPPOSE," said the buyer for one of the biggest middle Western jobbing houses, addressing a friendly competitor across the table at their club, "that Jim Gollop comes as near to being the synonym for sunshine as any man can be."

"Yes, and that's why he succeeds so well. Somehow when I'm tired, or depressed, I like to see Jim Gollop coming through the door. And he's about the only commercial traveler I would ever say howdy to at those times. He's like a tonic, Jim Gollop is. He just seems to radiate good will, and friendliness, and optimism wherever he goes. I think I noticed that surprising faculty of his more on this last round of his than ever before."

The manager looked up thoughtfully, and said, "Come to think of it, I noticed that, too. Not that he wasn't always cheerful, and persistent, and smart enough in his business, but this

last time he seemed to fairly outdo himself. I asked him if his aunt was dead. 'Why?' says he. 'Oh, you're so happy I thought maybe you'd fallen heir to an unexpected fortune,' I told him."

"What did he say?"

"Said 'Old man, I've found something that beats that all hollow. I've found the philosopher's stone. I've found the back door at least to the house of happiness.' And I'll swear I don't believe he was joking, although it's sometimes hard to tell when Jimmy is in earnest."

"Humph! Must be in love," said the other man.

"Well, he might be worse off," said the manager. "If he draws as luckily as I did—well—You've met my wife and kiddies."

And it did seem as if Jimmy, making his long rounds, was meeting with inordinate success; for life smiles on those who smile and the happy salesman is like the Happy Warrior, because all things, sooner or later, come to his feet. The art of salesmanship is the art of winning, and there is no such animal as a successful drummer with a perpetual grouch. But just the same the astute Jimmy's progress was not so easily profitable

from the personal point as he had conceived, and as he had ardently hoped. He had left New York in his customary optimism with the boastful prediction, "I'll learn the candy girl's name, and where she lives when she's at home, and when her birthday is, and all about her, before I get back. And on the day I get her name I'll telegraph an order to a New York florist to take her the biggest bunch of violets she ever saw."

At the end of the first week he felt that the next week must surely bring the coveted information, and at the end of the second week he made a bet with himself that he'd find it out in the third. Then when the third week proved equally barren, he doubled the stakes and lost them on the fourth week.

"Anyhow," he communed with himself, "I'm more than half way through, and shall win on the next stretch."

But his hopes, increasing as his tour of elimination progressed, began to turn to anxieties as his margin for developments narrowed until he was almost feverishly eager in his pursuit when he entered his last and final week. Everywhere he went there were the same old names and the same old faces. One or two customers had

sold out, but invariably they were men. It was on his last day, when hope had waned, that he found what he hoped was a clue. Mrs. Ellen Sturgis, of Lansing, Michigan, who, according to his blue book, was "quite a lady, credit A1, tall, good dresser, very quiet, somewhat standoffish, fond of horses, because, owns her own trap outfit and nice little cob," had sold out and gone to parts unknown.

"Didn't she leave any address?" inquired Jimmy of the new owner, who was an affable, elderly gentleman given to loquacity.

"Not with me. Probably at the post office. Hope I can do as well with this business as she did, and I think I can do better. But she made money here, all right. Of course she had a society pull to start with because you see she was the widow of a man who was thought to be pretty well heeled until he died; then she had to go into business to support herself, and all the best people in the town patronized her and—anyone can do business with that kind of a pull."

Jimmy closed his order and loitered around the mirror-garnished shop until he got an opportunity to talk with a girl whose face was familiar.

"Let me see," said Jimmy, thoughtfully, "Didn't Mrs. Sturgis have a daughter who was 'most always here?"

"Nellie? Sure. You remember her, don't you? Nice looking girl with brown hair and wonderful teeth. We all liked Nellie a lot more than we did her mother. Stuck-up old dame, I called her. But Nellie was all to the good."

Jimmy suddenly developed a mad desire to get away from there. He got as far as the corner and was tempted to turn into an alleyway and do a brief but sprightly dance on his own; but decided that he would lose no time in finding the telegraph office.

"Got her! Got her at last!" he jubilated mentally. "Now for the violets, then it's me for the hotel, and the long letter apologizing for not writing sooner and—um-m-mh!—I'll tell her I broke my wrist in Ashtabula. That's a good place to break one's wrist in. No—that won't do She'd wonder why I didn't dictate a letter to some blonde hop-o-my-thumb in some nice quiet hotel. How about the flu? Um-m-mh—afraid that wouldn't square up with my keeping on the road. Urgent and continual business sounds too cold—considering how warm I feel.

I must never tell her the truth that I'd forgotten her name, and what she looked like, and be the boob I am by admitting that I'd never paid enough attention to her before then to take notice of her. Girls don't like to think that anyone could possibly forget them after one good, square look. Hurts their vanity, I reckon. And she's not the sort I can write to and say, 'Kid, you made a hit with me and I'm your little stick of candy from now until I go to some place so hot I melt!' No, I've got to get some excuse that'll get by, or—go out into somebody's town park and cut my throat. I'm hit so badly it hurts! And if anything goes wrong with this deal it's—it's all off with Yours Truly. It just seems to me that would be the one thing I've ever had happen that I couldn't recover from!"

He had thought of her so much, by day and night, that he entertained a strange sense of familiarity, as if he had known and loved her all through life. So vivid were his impressions that he could not forget little inflections of her musical voice, tiny feminine gestures, stray sparkles of her eyes, the very echoes of her modulated laughter. All the weeks of his search, forever arousing in him by disappointment an increased

determination, were but additions to their acquaintanceship. All the smothered, dormant sentiment accumulated throughout his life had been exploded, as by a spark, to burst into a brilliancy that filled his entire horizon. Life was filled with dazzling and unexpected stars of shining gold. There was but one moon in all his heavens, a warm, friendly, almost mystic moon that rendered gentle and fine everything upon which it bestowed benignancy. His universe could scarcely note the extinguishment of a sun. He had never paused to analyze it, but had fallen upon the truth that the love of a man of thirty-four makes or breaks far more irrevocably than does the evanescent love of a boy. The latter patient recovers amazingly. The former seeks a hospital alone, and the soul of him dies!

Jimmy found less difficulty in telegraphing an extravagant order for violets to be sent to "Miss Nellie Sturgis, care Martha Putnam Hotel, New York," than he did in the composition of a suitable letter of apology.

"I've never been so darned particular about what kind of stationery I used before," he thought, as he stared at the display in a shop and cogitated over what was the best. "In fact, come

to think of it, hotels have paid for all I've ever used, and most times I didn't care much whether it came in reams or in rolls. Just so it would show where the lead pencil had traveled across. About all I ever thought of a letter was that one begins writing in the upper right hand corner, writes straight across, then goes back to the left hand again and does it over until the page is full, then turns it over and does some more, and at last thinks whether he ought to sign 'Yours truly,' 'Yours sincerely,' 'Your friend,' or 'Your old pal.' "

He wished now that he had time to secure something in blue with his monogram embossed either in the corner or the center, and with some special envelopes to match. Ordinary paper, purchasable from a regular shop, didn't seem good enough to be handled by those slender white fingers he had longed to kiss. There was nothing good enough for them, and anything less than the unattainable good enough might soil them.

"Dear me! What a particular, hard-to-please old crank!" said the young thing who served him after he, the traveling ray of sunshine, had

departed with the most exclusive box of paper in the shop under his arm.

The fortunate, but to Jimmy Gollop unappreciated, fact is that this world is at the present moment filled with men who have tried to write just such letters, and that probably it always has been so since the first cave man tried to write an excuse to the first cave girl on a block or stone. Probably that cave man, too, lied with laborious misgivings. Probably he pleaded everything from urgent business to a broken head, or explained that the posts were delayed because for thirty-four days a dinosaurus had been blocking the traffic. And probably, just as now, the cave girl knew he lied, pouted, sulked, and then forgave him. Perhaps in those vigorous days she swore. Perhaps some of them do now. There are things of which, alas! one can never be certain.

At 6:32 o'clock, p. m., after fortifying himself with dinner, James Gollop retired to the writing room of the hotel and began. At 7:35 o'clock James Gollop thought he could write better in the privacy of his room where there were no distractions intervened by a lot of fools who should have been born dumb, but were unfortunately

gifted with speech that was devoted to subjects that were of no importance at all in comparison with the epistolatory efforts of one James Gollop. By midnight the persistent correspondent had used a box of stationery, and had composed letters enough to have formed a book in the style of the "Ready Letter Writers' Friend," containing everything from letters of condolence to congratulation, and from stern business to effusive sentiment. The sole letter missing might have been one pertaining to the birth of twins. And this was what he mailed:

"DEAR MISS STURGIS: I have atoned for my seeming negligence by having some violets sent you to-day, fortunately remembering that those were the flowers for which you expressed a preference on that memorable occasion when we together visited the horse show. I am hoping to be in New York by Thursday next when I trust I shall have the great pleasure of seeing you at your hotel. Please transmit my cordial good wishes to your mother, and believe me,

"Most sincerely your friend,

"J. R. GOLLOP."

In the morning he blithely whistled and sang as he packed his samples, and, following his custom, left his route card at the desk when he paid his bill.

"Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and then home," he confided as he tossed the card across to the clerk. "I don't suppose you'll get any mail for me; but one never knows what the management of the biggest chocolate company on earth might do. So I always play safe. Business first! That's my motto. Got it hung on the lattice in my arbor in the garden down home in Maryland. Keeps me from forgetting that I'm a drummer instead of a millionaire and that I owe my feed to the firm that gives me work. So long! Wish you house full and that you keep full too. Good-bye!"

He danced his merry way through Harrisburg so ebulliently that a string of dazed patrons breathed not until after he had gone, and in Philadelphia outdid all his former efforts and doubled his previous orders. The world was filled with glory and happiness. New York was but a little way distant and above it there arched a sky of promise. He returned to his hotel that

evening and was handed two telegrams. The first was from his firm and read:

"Mrs. Ellen Sturgis, formerly Lansing, opening new place in Easton, Pennsylvania, wishes you to take full order. Important."

The second was from the New York florists:

"Must be mistaken address. Miss Nellie Sturgis unknown at Martha Putnam. Please advise."

For a moment he was stunned, then his optimism, buoying him above all rebuffs, caused him to laugh at himself.

"Poor girl! Something happened! The New York studio, and the lessons in painting by that chap with the crazy name blew up and she's had to go back to work. Sorry! But—by heck—if she wants to take lessons in painting she shall have a chance some day if I have to teach her myself! Wonder what happened to the old lady's bank roll? Must have been something unexpected. Hard luck! Will I go to Easton? By the first train unless they've got an aeroplane service!"

At an early hour on the following forenoon Jimmy stood outside a shop in the fashionable quarter of Easton and read the neat sign:

> The Elite Confectionery will occupy these premises Dec. 10th. Fittings and decorations being done by Merthyn Cabinet Co.

Eagerly he advanced to the open door through which the sounds of industrious hammering and sawing issued, and paused for a moment to admire the growing interior.

"She's going to have a nice place, all right," he thought. "It's harmonious and strictly first class. That's the way to do it."

He spoke to a man who was polishing some newly laid tile, who replied, "Mrs. Sturgis? I think she's in her office. It's straight back through the door. She was there a minute ago, with her daughter."

Not Mercury of the winged heels advanced more swiftly than did Jimmy Gollop, nor was Mercury's heart ever fluttering so gladly. In a disorderly little office, plainly make-shift for the time being, sat the proprietress whom he

instantly recognized as "Mrs. Sturgis, formerly of Lansing," and at a littered table beside her, checking up a collection of bills, sat a redheaded girl wearing glasses and whose honest face was illuminated by a friendly grin showing fine teeth, but who Jimmy remembered as one always to be seen behind the counter in Lansing.

"I hope you remember me too, Mr. Gollop," she said, after he had automatically shaken hands with her mother. "I'm Nellie Sturgis. The one you used to call 'Sturgis Number Two,'" and the friendly simper she gave him was about as welcome as a punctured tire in a road race.

CHAPTER V

HAD Jim Gollop kept a diary, the entries for certain dates might have ran thus:

"Friday: Stood all day in front of Martha Putnam Hotel, waiting for Candy Girl to come in or out. Very observant small boys in neighborhood, and policeman who begins to suspect. No luck.

"Saturday: Stood all day in front of Martha Putnam hotel, waiting for Candy Girl to come in or out. Small boys a nuisance. Policeman asked me if I'd lost anything in that neighborhood. No luck.

"Sunday: Stood all day in front of Martha Putnam hotel waiting for Candy Girl to come in or out. Boys not so bad. New cop asks questions. Gave new cop a five.

"Monday: Got to Martha Putnam early, and at ten o'clock saw taxi arrive and ducked across street, and——"

He never could have written the rest of it;

for from the taxi there descended a young lady who handed a light suit case to the porter, asked him to pay the bill, and would have entered the Martha Putnam had she not discovered a man nearly blocking her path, with an extended hand, and with an ingratiating smile on his face, who said, "How lucky to meet you just as I was about to leave. How are you?"

The policeman on the corner grinned, pulled his mustache, winked at himself, jingled the change in his pocket left from that grateful five, and then swung up his hand to caution the taxi driver as the latter turned into the cross street.

"You're a nice one, I must say," she remarked, half petulantly. "You might at least have dropped me a note to ask how I am getting along, and whether I am industrious, and all that rot! But did you? No! You took me to the horse show, and back to the hotel, and then vanished as if you had withdrawn yourself into your musty old shell!"

It was on the very tip of his tongue to tell her there on the street of his long days and nights of hope and fear, of his terrible remissness of memory, and of his desperation; but he checked himself in time and expostulated, "I did write

you!" and then, his moment of honesty passing to the tortuous ways of diplomacy asked, "Didn't you get the letter?" And he inquired as sincerely as if he did not already know that this was an impossibility because he had not addressed it to her real name, whatever that might be.

"No," she said, "I didn't." But he saw by her glance of indignation toward the hotel entrance that she believed someone therein remiss, and credited him with thoughtfulness. His spirits raised and he was himself once more, fencing as best he might for an opening.

"Well, it doesn't matter, now that I've found you," he said with such profound gladness in his voice that it caused her to glance at him, half bewildered, and half curiously, and then to play her own part, as if to prevent him from betraying too much.

"I've been away for three whole days. Went up to visit some friends in Montreal. Had a glorious time. Had my first lesson in skating and—— But tell me, how long shall you be here in town?"

He was swiftly depressed by the recollection that already he had overstayed his time by a whole day, and must at the latest depart that

night or—resign his job! A job without her was nothing. She without a job an impossibility! He bowed to necessity and said, almost somberly, "I've got to pull out to-night. I must! I've been here now for three days, most of the time right here in front of——" and then flushed like an embarrassed boy, checked himself, and was immediately glad that she did not seem to notice his unfinished sentence.

"Well, then, this whole day is yours," she said, gayly. "First of all, come in until I run upstairs a moment. You can wait in the reception room. Second, I'm gorgeously, terribly, awfully hungry, and you can take me somewhere to lunch, or if you wish to call it so—breakfast. Thirdly, you can then think over what we can do. I refuse to go to Jorgensen's this day. It's been rather a poky all-work and no-play time for me ever since you were here and—come inside. I shan't be more than five minutes. You dear old thing! You are an oasis in the desert and I'm as happy to see you as if I had never had a friend on earth!"

He was too stupefied with delight to take advantage of her temporary absence to conduct adroit inquiries at the desk. Indeed, he was

drugged with happiness, and sat like a big half-embarrassed, half-dreaming youth, twirling his hat in his hands, pulling off and putting on his gloves, and tracing patterns with his stick on the carpet until she reappeared, and then he was strangely lacking in self-confidence and readiness.

He took her to one of the best uptown restaurants for breakfast and she ate with an appetite that pleased him, giving, as it did, evidence of glorious health. And then came his second fortunate moment of the day.

"I'd tell you a secret, Mr. Sobersides," she said with a brisk little laugh, "if I wasn't a little bit afraid you'd give me away to Mamma. You know how horribly conventional she is—and—and it's only lately that I came to think one could trust you with a secret of this sort."

"Secrets," he assured her with a grin, "are my specialty. Secrets. Why it's my business to know secrets!"

"All right! Here goes!" she said, leaning toward him and displaying a mischievous smile. "You remember I told you I intended to have a studio of my own? Well, Mother set her foot down on it as if I had invited her to share part-

nership in a snake. Oh, you should have heard her. You know how she can freeze one out! She said that if I thought she would permit me to become one of a crowd of mongrel Bohemians and such, she would drag me off to the Wilmarths' with her, or cancel all painting lessons, or—Honestly! I think she threatened to have me sent to an Orphans' Home, or a hospital for the feeble minded. Well, I'm twenty-two years old, and Mamma doesn't seem to know it yet. Also, I'm able to take care of myself, and to have an idea of what I want. I'm going to be a painter, Jorgensen himself says I have talent, and between you and me, my sketches were the only ones done by his pupils that caused the critics to say much at his last exhibition. They gave me a quarter of a column and all the other girls together got a paragraph. Wasn't it lovely? So I'm going to have a studio of my own, and that's the secret! Understand?"

"Not quite," he admitted.

"Stupid! Don't you see, Mamma mustn't know I have one, and so no one else must, either. Honestly, you're the only one within the charmed circle up to now. Listen! I've taken a studio in MacDougall alley under the name of

Mary Allen. No one must know but what a real Mary Allen really has that studio. Down there I'm going to be Mary Allen and no one else. Now don't you start in to shake your head and look shocked."

It dawned on him that this to him was like an anchor to a ship adrift. He was in the conspiracy! He was participant in a location and a name! He leaned back and laughed softly with exultation which she mistook for amused support.

"I swear to you," he said, lifting his right hand with mock solemnity, "that as long as you have the lease on this place, wherever it is, I shall know you only as Mary Allen! I shall write you there as Mary Allen! I shall send cards and flowers to Mary Allen! And I hereby solemnly swear never to divulge to anyone, even the queen's torturers, who Mary Allen is, that she is any other than Mary Allen, a poor struggling artist who lives by work on pickles, jam, and paté de foie gras! Is that oath enough?"

"Good," she responded, gleefully. "First rate! All we need to complete the plot is some perfectly absurd title for you, and we have it complete. How would Percival St. Clair do?"

"Make it Bill Jones, the Pirate, and I'll agree!" he declared.

"Bill Jones, Pirate, you are henceforth," she laughed. "Just fancy you, of all people, leading a double life under the name of Bill Jones!" and again she laughed so merrily that he joined in without reserve. Fortunately there was none near save a staid old waiter to criticize their freedom, and of him they were unaware.

He was still desirous, however, of inducing her to betray her real name, and so rather adroitly asked, "But I can't see why you didn't take the lease under your own name. Surely this town is big enough so that all leases aren't published, or if so, it seems a safe bet that your mother never would read them daily. Why not under your own name?"

"There you go, spoiling the sport!" she declared. "Do you know where MacDougall Alley is? No? Well, I'll tell you. It's but a little way west of Washington Square, is a blind alley in an old section, and is now one of the best studio districts in New York. It's so famous that every once in so often it is written up by enterprising special writers, and I have seen pictures of it and its studios and frequent

comments on the work being done there by this or that artist or sculptor. So you see that, sooner or later, Mamma would certainly hear of it if I used my own name. That's the reason for Mary Allen!"

"And for Bill Jones. Don't forget that low-browed ruffian, Bill Jones, the pirate of the piece," he replied, secretly baffled, but outwardly amused.

Thinking it over afterward, Jimmy frequently wondered what ever became of that wonderful day. He was assured that he had met the Candy Girl at ten o'clock in the forenoon, and that he had bade her good-by in front of the Martha Putnam Hotel at four fifteen, leaving himself not one second to spare for reaching the railway station and by mathematical computation that meant that he had been with her for six hours and fifteen minutes; but as far as his sense of ecstasy was involved, that day was certainly no longer than an hour in length. He recalled that she took him to a private picture exhibit and that he was hopeful that her signature on some of her work would give him knowledge of her name; but that these were all signed with a funny little character rather than with a name

or initials; that he challenged her to show him the published criticisms of her work, and that she again baffled him, unwittingly, by declaring that she would mail them to him, and then later decided that it was immodest to boast and would show them to him only after she had repeated her success and felt her reputation established.

Looking into the doorway of the Pullman he saw two other commercial travelers whom in other days he would have joyously rushed forward to greet, glad of good companionship. Time and again he had altered his route that he might journey with them; but now he withdrew through the corridor into the adjoining sleeper, hailed the Pullman conductor and exchanged his berth for a stateroom in another car whither he retired, shut and locked the door, and sat down like a man in a dream. He craved privacy that he might be alone to review that wonderful day and dream. Furthermore, the complexities of his situation had been augmented by her last and hastily uttered caution just before he had parted with her: "I'm going to take Dad into my confidence the first time he comes to New York where I can talk with him —or possibly I may do so by letter. But don't you

say anything to him when you see him. You might upset things. I wrote him that you took me to the Horse Show, and—well—he replied rather oddly, it struck me! And—see here, I may as well tell you something! Dad doesn't like you. You see, he doesn't know you as well as I do. Mother's all right but—If I were you I'd steer clear of Dad until—I'm going to have a talk with him! You know how obstinate he can be, and—He once said that you lived in a universe that had no stars and but one sun, and that this single sun was yourself. Keep away from Dad!"

His surmise that she was the daughter of a widow had thus been upset. It was the first time he had been made aware that her father was alive. Henceforth he must be circumspect with every male customer on his list except jobbers and wholesalers. Any one of them might be the father of Mary Allen, concealing a profound disapproval or active dislike. His only hope was that this inimical one would betray his identity by reference to the Horse Show!

He was unaware that daylight had given way to dark, that the lights were on, and that he was still staring blankly out of the window until the

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steward from the dining car tapped on his door and asked if he wished supper.

"Yes, served in here," he replied, and so continued that pleasant process of review and unpleasant consideration of obstacles. Not the least ground for his happiness was the certainty that at last she did have some name by which he could address her and a permanent address, and—he liked that name, Mary Allen!

When he arrived at the hotel in Media City he discovered a strange air of depression in the demeanor of the porters, bellboys and clerks until he signed his name, when the ice thawed to a noticeable degree.

"What's the matter here?" he demanded of the girl behind the desk. "Am I no longer popular around this caravanserai?"

"You are, Mr. Gollop," she replied with a laugh, "but the truth is that since there are two of you we have to act cautiously until we find out which one of you it is! Here, boy! Show Mr. Gollop up to sixty-one."

"I thought it was you, sir," said the boy with a grin that was at least unrestrained. "I offered to bet it was you, and not that old stiff what looks like you."

"Hello, Jim. Glad to see you again," said the manager, appearing in his private office door. "Since that last trip of yours your double has been here twice. First time everybody called him 'Jimmy,' and I had to apologize again. Since then we've all been rather shy."

"Oh, you mean that judge, eh? Pleasant old party, isn't he!"

"Pleasant and palatable as castor oil mixed with asafetida," replied the manager with a scowl. "But see here, Jimmy, he cuts considerable ice here in this state. Don't forget that. And he doesn't like you at all, at all. What he said when I explained that there was a drummer named Gollop who looked like him wasn't flattering to you or to my sense of observation. Seemed to take it as an insult. Said you should be kept out of this state. Called you an impertinent ass."

Jimmy looked prodigiously hurt for a moment, and was then rather angry.

"Shucks! That's no way to act," he declared. "I can't help how I look any more than he can. I reckon that either of us, or at least it goes as far as I'm concerned, would change his looks if he could. If I had my way I'd be as pretty as

a cinema star and twice as soulful. Anyhow, I'd look as different from that Judge as I possibly could. His face and disposition would raise storm waves on a lake if it were filled with glue. And he'd better look out! If he thinks he can run around this end of my territory knocking me everywhere he goes I'll give him something to talk about. I tried to be a good fellow with him, and—well!—I'm just as sore as he is!"

The manager shook his head solemnly and rubbed his chin as if recalling really unpleasant recollections.

"Don't blame you," he sympathized. "He's a pompous buck, all right. He's out to get the Republican nomination for the governorship. Papers all mention him regularly now. And the nomination in this state's just about as good as the election. That's a cinch. He's a stand-patter of the gilt-edged variety. The only issue on which he hasn't shot his mouth off is on votes for women. Nobody quite knows how he stands on that issue, because he keeps dumb as an oyster on that point. But—I'm telling you all this so you can see that in a way it's unlucky you look so much alike."

"Good Lord!" declared Jimmy. "He ought

to be mighty thankful he does look like me. I'm a help, not a hindrance, to his campaign, if he had sense enough to know it. Besides, as far as I can reason, politics isn't of much more importance to the average individual than a rather pleasant and easy dose of medicine he has to take about once every four years and from which he never expects any benefit."

"Not so in this state," asserted the manager. "If you think there's no interest in politics here, you'll find out differently before you make your territory. Politics? It's all anyone will think of or talk about for the next six weeks!"

"Politics may come and go, but chocolate runs forever!" declared Jim with a wag of his finger, and then as the door blew open letting in a draft of cold air, "Say, looks blizzardish, doesn't it?"

"If we don't get four feet of snow within the next two days we'll be lucky," grumbled the manager. "Last winter at this time half the railways were blocked, and for eighteen hours the mails couldn't get through."

"Cheerful, merry cuss you are!" retorted Jimmy. "You certainly do fill everyone you meet chuck full of hope and bright thoughts. Just the same, I don't care to be snow bound

here. But I think neither snow nor politics will bother me at all."

All of which proved him a bad prophet, as he learned within the next forty-eight hours; for both snow and politics did enter into his affairs, first because it snowed as if intent on smothering the earth, and second, because every woman with whom he dealt insisted on bringing up the subject of national suffrage for women, even the discussion of chocolates being for the time relegated to a secondary place.

"I traveled through the middle west after a drought; was on the coast when they fought free silver; was in the northwest when it campaigned for the referendum; in Wisconsin when they fought cigarettes and in Maine when the original thirsty population tried to upset the prohibition law; but of all places I've been in, and all campaigns I've been through the outskirts of, this woman's vote thing here has the rest looking friendly, peaceful and uninteresting!" he said to himself after the second day. "I suppose women go to the polls in Heaven, and according to reports it's a pretty well run sort of place, so maybe it'd work down here."

His soliloquy was brought to an end by the

appearance of a bell boy bearing a telegram. It was from his firm.

"Go Yimville Saturday attend court proceedings re discharge of Intermountain General Supply Company from bankruptcy Roncavour. Matador our attorney Wetherby Carmen."

He sat down on the edge of his sample case and said aloud, "Well, if that isn't rotten luck! What in the deuce does Roncavour mean?"

He rummaged through his grip and found the firm's code book and interpreted therefrom, "'Important to show courtesy for future business relations when credit fully restored.' And 'Matador' means 'Introduce yourself to' and 'Carmen' means 'Have notified him you are coming.'"

"Me the diplomat!" said Jimmy with a sigh, now opening a time table. And again he was not particularly happy, because Yimville was a mountain town up in another county, and the sole train he could take with any degree of comfort was one that would land him at his destination at one o'clock. A returning passenger train at 4:30 in the evening would bring him back to

his junction but it meant the loss of an entire day. It was strange how much more important time had become to him—that is—how much keener he was to return to New York at the earliest possible moment. He had even begun the formation of a scheme whereby he had hoped to steal two whole days out of his trip, and that, too, without the knowledge of his firm. Such things have been done now and then by gentlemen of the road.

"The only thing that can save me from going up there is for the snow to fall twice as fast," said Jimmy, and looked hopefully out through the window of the sample room. The outside air was filled with big, gently falling flakes, and already the street was deeply paved by its heavy blanket. Groups of boys released from school were pelting one another gleefully, and Jimmy observed that the snow on the pavement was already high enough to cover their knees. A big electric sweeper was struggling to keep the tram lines clear. Down past the corner he could glimpse a tiny section of a park. The trees therein were like white pyramids, their branches bending heavily beneath the weight. On the roof of the building opposite the hotel a mass

of telephone wires, each with its little drift piled up as if the air had been rendered motionless, was being scrutinized by a lineman on whose legs were spurs for climbing poles. The man appeared to be quite anxious. Jimmy's spirits rose bouyantly, finding in each view some hopeful sign.

"Of course they'll keep the main railways open," he remarked, "and if it blocks these branch lines I can have a good excuse for not going up there. And it'll be all the better if the wires to Yimville fall down, because it'll back up the account of the storm that I'll hand in as an explanation why I didn't go. It's a good old world, after all!"

Indeed he passed a happy evening, playing billiards with another drummer who was a very good cue, and went hopefully to bed. He awoke hopefully, and through his bedroom window saw that the snow was still falling and that it was deep. Very deep! At the breakfast table the headlines of the morning paper announced that traffic was disorganized for the time being, and that the wires in many directions were down. Also that by strenuous efforts and the aid of relays of snow plows the main lines of railways

had been kept open, although timetables were slightly confused. And then after smoking his morning cigar and exchanging jokes with anyone who looked pleasant and happy, he inquired at the desk as to the possibilities of reaching Yimville.

He loitered and whistled and hummed while the clerk phoned to the station.

"All right," said the clerk, smiling as if bestowing glad news. "Line up that way will be clear by noon. Wires are down, but that doesn't matter to you, I know. You're still in luck!"

Jimmy's hopes went smash, and resignedly he turned away. He was in for it, and was too conscientious to deliberately lie to his firm about the impossibility of getting through. Promptly on time for his train he was at the station and checked his baggage through to the "next jump," thus relieving himself of impediments on this diplomatic side step of his to Yimville. He boarded the train, but finding no one who looked very approachable, and feeling eager for companionship, walked through its entire length of three coaches, without discovering a single person he had ever seen. Indeed, the coaches were nearly empty, as if traffic were

badly disrupted. The train caught up with a snow plow working through great drifts in a cutting, and had to wait. Jimmy got out and watched proceedings with great interest. There was something fascinating about the way those two locomotives drew back and then charged the snow drifts furiously, and stirred up a miniature storm of white. Also, the storm had ceased, and once the sun broke through for a few minutes. Jimmy was glad for this, because now that a storm could no longer work in his favor, he preferred everything to clear up. Sunshine fitted his temperament. It was a good old sun, after all!

He did not even complain when his train arrived at Yimville a full hour late. He had never been there before. It was a pretty place, he thought, with its white hills all around it, and its red station under a roof that looked to be made of white stuff three feet in thickness, and a town omnibus with fat driver who waddled importantly, and a half dozen loafers drawling comments. He was the sole passenger to descend and was starting toward the omnibus when accosted by a man in a full coat who said, "This way, sir. Mr. Wetherby couldn't come to

meet you, as he is makin' a talk up there now. We wasn't any too sure you'd get here, on account of this plaguey snow fall, but he sent me down to make sure that if you did you'd get to the court house on the jump. Right around the corner of the depot is our old bob sled."

"That was decent of Wetherby. Hadn't expected to be met. Good old Wetherby!" said Jimmy, climbing into the rear seat of the sleigh and pulling a comfortable lap robe around his legs. A ripping team of bays, sturdy, and eager to be off, fully occupied the driver's attention. The sleigh bells sang a tune to thrill the blood. The steam from the horses' nostrils blew out in regular spurts, ending in rhythmic and quickly dissipating clouds. Jimmy Gollop enjoyed it all, and was glad he had come. He leaned back and admired the road that stretched for a mile and a half between the railway station and town.

"Some town!" commented Jimmy with enthusiasm born of delight in admiration for clean, well kept, modern houses. "And—Hello!—Pretty good little stores, too. And there's certain to be a town square. Whole town looks on it of course. Always that way in county seats. Square, court house in the middle, lot of trees.

Hitching posts, maybe, with a chain around the square. Lot of farmer's teams tied there. Some place, all right!"

And his predictions were not far wrong, as was proven when the horses came jingling out into the streets facing the square, the court house, and the teams tied to the hitching posts. There were many of them, the horses blanketed and unblanketed, drowsing where they stood. There were stores and shops with a few pedestrians moving about their business—a sleepy panorama of winter life in a nice, clean, comfortable little town.

The sleigh halted with a flourish in front of the court house steps and two men rushed out as if astonished, then hastened to solicitously welcome Jimmy, who was somewhat puzzled by their demeanor.

"Mighty glad to see you, Judge!" declared the one who first clutched his hand. "They told us down at the station that the railroad up to Princetown from Media City was completely blocked. So we had given you up. But you can see how interested in what you have to say the folks around Yimville are when you get inside. Yes siree! Got the court house full.

Seems as if we had every farmer from forty miles around here, and——" he stopped and chuckled loudly—"every farmer's wife and every spinster! The women are certainly mighty anxious to know how you stand on votes for 'em! Talk about home industries for the men, and the usual bunk about protective tariff, but—go easy about national votes for women, Judge!—Go easy. The men folks don't want it and they dassn't say so for fear they'll get hit over the head with a maul or a fryin' pan at home. Get me? If you say yes, that you're a woman's righter out and out, you'll secretly lose the men's votes, but catch the women's. If you say you're against 'em, Judge, it's most likely you're a plumb goner because the women'll vote against you, and all the men that's for it'll vote against you, and all them that dassn't do anything without askin' permission from their wives'll hop you, and others won't count. So go easy, Judge! Go easy! Keep on the fence as if you were a rooster that had got frozen on the top rail. Bend a little this way and a little that, so's to make both sides think you're for 'em. Say a heap that means nothin' at all! Hurry up. They're waitin'!"

At first Jimmy was half-paralyzed by misunderstanding. Next he was half-hypnotized by the voluble man's stream of rapid talk. Then his eye wandered to a big sign on a board wired up to a pillar of the court house entrance, where he read:

"GRAND PUBLIC RALLY! The distinguished Jurist, Hon. James Woodworth-Granger, Judge of the Fourth District Court of Princetown, will on Saturday, December 1st, address the voters of Yimville on the issues of the campaign. TURN OUT! TURN OUT! and hear our next governor on vital issues for the state welfare. COME ONE! COME ALL! EVERY MAN AND WOMAN WELCOME! Time 2 o'clock P. M. sharp! Place, County Court House. DON'T FORGET!"

He digested this in a flash, and comprehended the situation. "But—but—" he said, "Wetherby was to settle that affair of the Intermountain General Supply Company to-day and——"

"Oh, that was settled this forenoon, Judge," soothingly explained the other welcomer. "Court got it out of the way so's the court room could be open for the speech making this after-

noon. Hello! Hear 'em? That's the Yimville Silver Cornet Band. Bill—I mean Mister Perry—has given the band the tip you've got here. Come on! Now's the time!"

Any man less jocular, less nimble witted, and self-possessed than Mr. James Gollop, would have then and there declared himself, and his identity; but Mr. James Gollop's wits and humor, running in team and usually at a gallop, were now racing like lightning. It was too late to be a diplomat in behalf of his firm's future business with the Intermountain people; and this boob of a country judge, pompous, slow, egotistical, had been carrying a hatchet for one Jim Gollop ever since he had suffered through the peculiar likeness to this unmentionable candy drummer and —Jimmy suddenly grinned, buttoned his coat, cleared his throat and in ponderous dignity bent stiffly forward and said, "I am here! I am at your disposal! It will afford me great pleasure to express my views to such an attentive audience. Let us make haste!"

CHAPTER VI

THE distinguished Judge, as impersonated by that rank and, for the moment, highly irresponsible, drummer, was led up a broad flight of stone stairs and two men opened two big green baize doors in front of him. The Silver Cornet Band played "See the Conquering Hero" with so much zest that trombones cracked, clarionets made frantic goose-notes and the cornets sounded as if made of anything other than silver. The commodious court room was, despite the outer inclemency of road and weather, packed with men and women who stood up and yelled a welcome that for the moment dazed the impostor; but he recovered his nerve and mischievousness instantly, and no actor ever fell into his part more completely than did he. The Judge was ponderous, but Jimmy went him one better. The Judge "threw a chest" when he had an audience, but Jimmy swelled until his buttons strained. The Judge

walked like the late Henry Irving playing Mathias in The Bells, but Jimmy's feet dragged far more lugubriously. Jimmy had observed that the Judge assumed what is known as the "grave judicial" or otherwise "frozen face," and he therefore looked as much like a wooden image as was possible. Not immortal Caesar dead and turned to clay could have looked more claylike, for Jimmy looked like a whole brickyard. He moved austerely up the main aisle, now and then giving to right and left an imitation of the Judge's peculiarly stiff and condescending bow, mounted the platform, patronizingly shook hands with those thereon who hastened to greet him, and then, when the band subsided for want of wind, advanced to the front of the stage and was about to speak when he remembered the Judge's procedure and deliberately buttoned his coat, shot his cuffs, barked a stentorian "Ahem!" and poured himself a glass of water which he drank with almost painful deliberation, still affecting the Judge's mannerisms.

"Fellow citizens, I stand before you this afternoon," began Jimmy, in the hush, "first to apologize for my delay in reaching your welcoming

and friendly greetings which, as you who have traveled so far on this momentous occasion, may appreciate as being unavoidable. Knowing that you would be here regardless of winter's snows and winds to hear me expound my views, I can assure you that had it been necessary to come on snow shoes to prevent your loyalty to me from being in vain, I should have made the attempt, and perhaps like the youth who cried 'Excelsior,' might last have been seen plodding through the shades of night into your Alpine fastness, still striving to reach you."

Unwittingly he had made a flattering allusion to the locality, whose residents firmly believed it a rival of the Alps in scenic glories and hence he was well applauded.

"Didn't know the Judge was such a good campaigner," whispered one of the local politicians to his neighbor.

"That's the mush for 'em," assented the other.

Mr. James Gollop,. beginning to feel more thoroughly at home, was now thinking with ease and adroitness. Needless to note that he was mentally grinning.

"Inasmuch as I arrived so unavoidably late, and that the early darkness of winter renders the

roads so difficult for those who have long journeys to make, I shall somewhat curtail the remarks I have in mind," he said, pompously, and took another long drink of water.

"The great issue before the nation to-day, my fellow citizens, is Tariff Reform." And then he drawled and droned through a lot of stock arguments familiar to every man, woman and child in America, but in the meantime kept a furtive eye on the clock at the end of the court room, and gleefully observed that the afternoon was waning, and that outside it threatened an early twilight, intensified by a new fall of snow. He decided that it was time to get in his precious work of assisting the Judge's campaign with the final straws.

"Now, my friends," he said, confidentially and observing that his audience was growing restless, "I have given you the customary platform remarks concerning tariff and free trade; but I feel that I am in the hands of my friends, so I shall tell you that personally it doesn't matter a hang to me whether we have free trade or protection or tariff reform, or any of that wash!"

A bomb shell dropped from a Zeppelin could have had but little more effect. Everyone sat up

and gasped; particularly the two or three local politicians on the platform who half arose from their seats to protest.

"All I care about, to tell the honest truth," said the ingenious Jimmy, "is to get elected to the fat job of governing this state. It pays well, and I, as well as you, are aware that in addition there are some few pickings and perquisites which are well worth having."

Somebody in the audience cried, "Shame! Shame!" and a few more hissed; but Jimmy quelled the rising storm by holding up his hand for silence.

"Listen and have patience, My Friends!" he appealed, oracularly. "Other candidates from time immemorial have come to you with a lot of talk, but I am the first one who has ever dared to be honest with you. Isn't that true?"

Some of his party adherents, doing their best to uphold him to the last, loudly assented, and yelled, "Give the Judge a chance to finish! Let him finish!"

In tense silence and expectancy they settled back in their seats.

"Politics are to me like the law," he said, thoughtfully. "All bunkum! A man comes to

a lawyer to get a tiny agreement drawn that if he had the brains of a cow he could draw just as well himself. The lawyer looks profoundly intellectual, terribly wise, considerably puzzled as if this document might require a further course in a law school to be able to handle, and so forth, but I tell you, My Friends, that down in his innermost mind all he is thinking is, 'How much can I get out of this gazabo for this simple little job?' and then he taps the poor victim for all he thinks the latter will stand, pockets the fee, and after his client has gone, hands a memorandum to a four-dollar-a-week clerk and says, 'Jones, fill up a contract form with that stuff and mail it to this John Doe person in Squashville.' "

The crowd by this time was hopelessly divided, some believing the orator facetious, and the others for the first time in their lives having sympathy with a lawyer and believing they had for the first time met one who told the truth.

"Most judges, My Friends, are elected to the bench because their fellow lawyers think they will prove easy marks after they get there, and not because they are supposed to be particularly clever in the law. The best judge is the one that whacks his decisions up so that Lawyer Skinem

wins this week, and Lawyer Squeezehard the next, and Lawyer Gouge the next, and so on. If he can satisfy the lawyers he becomes renowned, and as far as the litigants are concerned, they don't matter at all. If they had any sense they wouldn't resort to the law anyway. Any fool knows that!"

Wetherby got up behind him, red faced and angry, to protest, but the crowd howled him down. And Wetherby, muttering, stormed indignantly out of the court room. Jimmy observed that he did so by a corner entrance near at hand and saw through the door that had been left open that it led into a cloak room and thence out to the street. He noted this with satisfaction. It increased his daring. Also by now it was getting dusk and someone turned on the electric lights.

A tall, angular, mannish sort of woman, rawboned, shrill, got up in about the center of the audience, and said, "You've been honest I take it, in what you said this far. But you don't dast to be honest, I'll bet, if I ask you a plain out and out question, Mister?"

"You ask it and see if I'm not," retorted Jimmy combatively.

"Then what's your honest opinion about votes for women? That's what interests a lot of us women more than all you've been talking about. What about general national suffrage, eh?"

The woman sat down and immediately around her was a group that vociferously and shrilly applauded, and Jimmy knew at once that this must be the militant suffragette party of that vicinity in full force and that it had come to try to put the Judge on record.

"First," he said, once more assuming great pomposity, "may I ask the lady who just spoke, whether she does, or does not represent any authoritative body of women of this grand and noble state?"

"You should know that, Judge. Don't pretend you don't; because you have seen me at a dozen meetings before, when I asked the same question and you hemmed and hawed, and straddled the fence and gave no answer at all that meant anything at all. You know well enough that I am the President of the Women's Suffrage Society of this state, and that sooner or later you've got to answer my question. Are you going to do it to-day, or do we have to keep following you?"

Jimmy looked carefully over to a chair at the edge of the stage where, on his entry, he had deposited his hat and coat despite the invitation of one of his supposed henchmen to hang them in the cloak room. Almost involuntarily he edged closer toward that chair before making his reply, and took time to drink another glass of water.

"Since that question has been so repeatedly asked, and hitherto, I admit, evaded, I shall now endeavor to make myself completely, plainly, and fully understood on that subject," he said, impressively, and waited until in the silence nothing could be heard save suppressed breathings.

"As I understand it, I am asked what is my personal opinion concerning the expediency and the justice of granting women of majority age the right of franchise in both national as well as state elections. Am I right?"

"That's it, precisely," came the voice of the woman who had asked the question, and there was a considerable note of triumph in her tone as if at last she had run her fox to earth.

"Then I say," said Jimmy, slowly, and emphatically, "that it is my honest opinion that

women should do as their mothers before them did, stay home, work, and raise their families and keep out of politics. Stop! Stop! Let me say what I have to say! I can't make myself heard if you hiss and yell!"

Some of them were on their feet. Some of the men applauded. Most of the women hissed; but they slowly settled back to hear him conclude.

"I say that a large majority—a very large majority!—of women don't know enough about politics to vote, and that a big percentage haven't brains enough to vote intelligently for a town dog catcher! And that if I had my way any woman who wanted to vote would be arrested and given six months in an imbecile asylum!"

And then, before anyone could surmise his intention, and in the midst of a wild pandemonium of noise he made a jump for his hat and coat, took a flying leap for the cloak room door, jumped through, bolted it on the inside, and like a flash was out in the street. The noise from the court room he had left behind sounded as if a riot had broken loose. There were shouts, screams, yells, and sundry intimations that a certain part of Yimville's population wanted

either his scalp, or to decorate him with tar and feathers. A boy driving a delivery wagon reduced to sleigh runners was passing by and Jimmy hastily waylaid him.

"Sonny," he said, "I'm in a hurry to get to the railway station to catch the four-thirty train. I've got just five minutes and if you make it for me, you get a five dollar bill."

That boy was a genius of finance. He lost small time in making a decision.

"Hop in, Mister. We'll make it or have a runaway!"

But short as was the delay, it had given time for the crowd in the court house to fairly heave itself into the street. And foremost in the lot charged a tall, angular woman, screaming to her followers, "Come on! Come on! Don't let him get away!"

The boy brought his reins down on the horse's back with a loud thwack and let out a yell for speed. The horse jumped like a sprinter taking off the tape and it was then that the large angry woman who headed the militant section of the state league, seeing that pursuit was futile, found a pile of bricks conveniently left by some repairer and with rather perfect aim let a chunk

fly at the retreating orator. It caught him neatly in its passage and although it barely grazed him, nearly knocked him from his seat.

"Wow!" he shouted. "That was a close one!" and then rubbing his scalp, burst into roars of delighted laughter as the mob was left behind. "That woman ought to get out of the bush league and pitch for the New Yorks! Who said a woman could never throw a brick?"

The boy, intent on earning the five, was on his feet and bending over the dash board exhorting his horse into a run. The improvised sleigh was careening madly as it took corners and an occasional bump, and in the last glimpse Jimmy had of the court house square it looked as if a hive of human beings had begun to swarm, or else that a nest of hornets had been so badly disturbed that its occupants were undecided whither to direct their stings. He looked hopefully forward as the station came in sight, expecting to see the train standing there panting after its previous run; but no train was in sight. He began to speculate on which way he could turn to escape the tempest of wrath he had aroused in case he had missed the train. He doubted if he could induce the boy to take him

to the nearest town, and moreover, had no idea of the distance. Also he doubted if he could escape a mob there, provided the news got through. For once in his life he began to doubt the wisdom of practical jokes.

The boy brought the horse up skating on its heels, by throwing his full weight back on the lines and shouting pacifyingly "Whoa-a-a! Who-oa, Bill!"

Jimmy leaped out on the platform shouting, "Wait right there, son, till I get some change. I think we're in time and—anyhow, you get the fiver!"

He ran into the station and, finding the window closed, opened the office door. A placid, disinterested young man wearing an eyeshade, who was sitting with his feet on a window desk and reading a novel, looked up at him and said, "Well?"

"Has that four-thirty train gone through?" demanded Jimmy, anxiously.

"Sixteen? Naw! She's off the map as far as I know."

Jimmy's spirits ebbed like mercury in a typhoon.

"And—when will the next train come through?" he asked, striving to speak calmly.

"The next train? That'll be a freight. It's due now from Morgan City. But you won't go on that?"

"Why?" questioned Jimmy, grasping at straws.

"Two reasons. One that she doesn't carry passengers, and the other that she doesn't stop here at all. Just whistles up there by the tank, and goes lobbin' along on her way."

"But—but couldn't you stop her in case of emergency?" asked Jimmy, feeling like a petitioner.

"Only thing I could stop her for would be on an order from the train despatcher," said the agent, with a grin of sympathy. "I'm not the owner of the line, you know. They don't thank me for stoppin' heavy freights on an upgrade such as they have to climb to get through here, just to ask 'em how the weather is where they come from, or what time it is, or to send a message to the engineer's beautiful daughter. Guess you'll have to wait for Number Sixteen, Mister, or, if you're in too big a hurry, hoof it. It's only eighteen miles to the next stop. Sorry!"

And then he yawned as if bored, and deliberately resumed his interrupted reading. Jimmy realized that he was knocking on the locked and unbending doors of an inexorable fate, and backed out. He went outside and hailed his rescuer, who had found a piece of gum that he was extricating from some wrappings that indicated a rather dirty pocket.

"Son, my brave youth, how far, I beseech thee, is it to the nearest town from here?" Jimmy asked.

"On a railroad?" queried the boy, biting off the tip end of the stick of gum and testing its flavor.

"Of course. What good is a town that's not on the railroad?"

"I guess it's about seven miles to Mountain City up to the north, and about eleven to Hargus. Hargus is down south."

Jimmy thought for a moment and then said, winningly, "And do you think you could drive me with old Bill as far as Mountain City?"

"Not on your life! Me drive you there? Humph! What's the matter with Jones? He runs a livery stable. I deliver groceries for the Emporium and—say! Mister!—if they find out

I drove you down here for that five dollars I ain't got yet, I'd get fired! Now about that five, did you get change?"

Jimmy appreciated that boy's business sense and gave him a five dollar bill that caused the young man much glee.

"Now," said Jimmy, cajolingly, "if you were to drive me to Mountain City, and I were to give you ten, and you were to go back to the Emporium with a letter I would write them when we got to Mountain City, a letter that would cause them to pat you on the back and maybe make you a clerk in the store; or if they didn't do that and fired you, and I was to get you a nice job somewhere in New York, maybe you might find the way to Mountain City, eh?"

The boy suddenly stopped masticating, and looked at him doubtfully. Jimmy assumed his most seductive grin, took his wallet from his pocket and exposed several bills, and fingered them with something like a caress.

"I could find the way all right, and I guess the roads could be got across somehow, and I'd like to make that money—Gee! I never had that much in my life! But—somehow it don't look square to treat the Emporium that way!"

Suddenly Jimmy was aware of a rumbling and roaring and puffing, and saw the expected freight train approaching. It whistled at the tank, true to form, and Jimmy ran across to the edge of the platform as it came panting along, and stared at it wistfully. He wished that he were expert in boarding trains, and then, as it passed, decided that it must be traveling at a rate of at least a hundred miles an hour, although it was barely doing fifteen. He made a desperate clutch at the rails of the caboose, felt as if his arm had been jerked from its socket and his heels into the air, and then found himself sitting in the middle of the track with his hat some ten or fifteen feet away and a cooling mixture of snow and cinders up his trousers legs. He got up, felt himself over to learn that he was unbroken, and recovered his hat.

"By gee whiz!" he exclaimed. "Never knew it was so hard to hop aboard one of those things before. Hoboes have it on me all right! My education's been neglected."

His solicitous friend, the boy, had come to see if there was anything left of him and said, "Hope you ain't hurted much, Mister? Humph! I could have caught her all right, I

bet you! You don't know how. The minute you catch hold you want to jump. If you wait you can't do nothin'. But I'll say you did look funny, all right, with your heels and your coat tails and your hat all flyin' at onct!"

"Well, I'm glad I amused you, anyway," said Jimmy, cheerfully. "Now about going to Mountain City, where were we? Oh, yes! The Emporium. Would you go if I got their consent—for a ten dollar bill you know?"

The boy brightened visibly.

"If you can get old Wade to say I can, you bet I'll go!" said the boy with marked enthusiasm. "He's got a 'phone, and there's one in the depot. Ask him!"

Jimmy hastened inside as fast as his stiffness would permit and was starting toward the ticket office to make a request for permission to use the 'phone when he happened to glance through the window looking toward the street. An arc light had sprung into being, and—he stopped with a gasp. Down the street was coming a crowd that was evidently in some haste and he recognized its leader. It was a large, bony woman, who strode like a man, and Jimmy thought that she

carried something in her hand, something that he surmised might be a selected missile.

"Good Lord!" he breathed. "If she hit me a clip with a little chunk before, what'll she do with a full-grown brick? Why, it'd be murder! I've got to get away from here if I have to steal the horse and kidnap that boy!"

Being quick in decision and swift in enterprise, and adaptable to sudden emergency, he ran back out with great presence of mind and shouted to the boy, "Come on, son! Get a move on you. Mr. Wade says it's all right and for you to take me as fast as you can. Let's be off before that crowd gets here looking for the train."

The boy barely caught the tail of the sleigh and thus proved that he might have boarded the train; for Jimmy, not waiting for him, had clutched the lines and stirred the restless nag to action by a surreptitious slap with his hand.

"The shortest road is back the way we come," insisted the boy, as Jimmy drove the horse recklessly across the end of the platform and into a road that appeared fortuitously in front of him.

"But I certainly do like this way best," insisted Jimmy, urging the horse to speed. "I've always been fond of this road."

"Well it's a mile outen the way," protested the boy.

"What's a mile to us, eh? You see it's such a nice clean road and it's been so well traveled that it's better than—what? Turn to the left you say? I always thought we went straight ahead here."

"Straight ahead would take us to the slaughter house," objected his guide.

"Oh! I thought the slaughter house was somewhere around the depot," said Jimmy with a grin at his own joke, which was entirely unappreciated by the boy.

The station, with its menace, had by now been left behind in the whirl of snow, and the heavy dusk of twilight. Jimmy was breathing again, and cheerful, having escaped the most imminent peril. The horse was loping steadily up the street as if imbued with the hope of a warm stall in a warm stable.

"Turn to the right! The right! That's the way," insisted the boy, and Jimmy, after a single backward glance to convince him that they had escaped the mob, said, "Son, I don't know these roads as well as you do. Maybe it'd be better if you took the lines. But whatever you do, keep

going. Mr. Wade says you are to nurry—that is for the first few miles. You see, he's afraid old Bill will catch cold if he's not kept moving, and they tell me that it's an awful thing for a horse to catch cold on a day like this for the want of exercise. Make him hustle!"

CHAPTER VII

AND Bill hustled them through the outskirts of the town, and into a road that was fairly good going, and out to where snowladen fields and snow weighted trees were on either hand before Jimmy's compassion swayed him to suggest that after all there was no very great hurry.

"I'm sort of glad of that," commented the boy. "Bill's about winded. He's my friend, and—and I don't like to see him puffin' like that. I'm right glad you'd just as soon slow down. I was worried about Bill."

Jimmy thought about Bovolarapus, and then of Bill, and liked that boy.

"To-night," he said, as he settled himself into his seat, "Bill shall have a box of chocolate caramels for dinner. And—say! son, are you cold?"

"Not much," said the boy, looking up at him with a grin. "Just a little; but I keep thinking

about that fortune I'm to get and that sort of keeps me warm."

Jimmy opened his overcoat and gathered his driver inside, and pulled up the tattered lap robe and said cheerfully, "Sporting life, this, eh?" But at the same time he was thinking regretfully of his ill-spent afternoon, and more than ever convinced that jests of a public nature were not worth while. And yet, in the midst of his personal discomfort, he did not miss the enjoyment of a chuckle at the thought of what he had left behind, and that fine harvest which the pompous Judge must reap. In fact, he began to find a certain pleasure in his adventure; for the snow stopped, the storm clouds moved restlessly, becoming ever more pallid, and then the newly risen moon broke through and made all his surroundings beautiful.

"The only things I miss," he muttered, "are sleigh bells and—Mary Allen!"

"Mary Allen? Who's she?" The voice of the boy disturbed him.

"Mary Allen," said Jimmy grimly, "is a girl who isn't crazy to vote. She likes horses. Probably she couldn't throw a brick. I've an idea she never had a vote, and that if she had one

she'd sell it as being the quickest and easiest way to get rid of it. And—I hope to the Lord that Mary Allen never visited Yimville before now, because if she hasn't, I'll do all I can to spare her from ever going there in the future!"

"I can't seem to remember that haystack over there," said the boy, with entire irrelevance, "but there's a house with a light in it, and—maybe we'd best ask if we're on the right road. They'll tell you."

"Right road? Aren't you sure about it?" asked Jimmy, perturbed.

"Well, you see, it looks different with all this snow and—better ask 'em in there, I think."

"You go and ask them."

"I got ter watch old Bill. He runs away sometimes."

"I'll hold him. You ask."

The boy got down and advanced to the house where, after a time, a woman appeared in response to his rapping and then, to point out the way, came to the gate and thence to the road. She pointed with an extended arm to the skyline and gave cautions about land marks at a point where three roads met.

"If you'd taken the first road to the left instead

of the second to the right, down below there, you'd have been on the main track; but you're not more than a half mile out of the way. And——" She stopped, suddenly bent forward, and peered at Jimmy. "Oh, it's you, is it?" she said with a toss of contempt. "You that believes women ain't got sense enough to vote! Oh, I was down to the court house this afternoon and heard you! And what's more, I can tell you it was mighty good for your precious hide that they didn't catch you. If I'd known that it was you that wanted to find the road to Mountain City I'd 'a' bit my tongue off rather than let it tell you anything at all, you old puffed up smart Alec! The only truth you ever told in your life, I'll bet, was when you admitted that all lawyers is a lot of thieves. You, a judge! But let me tell you that the women will get votes, and that when they do you couldn't be elected judge at a chicken show. You're a mean-minded pig of a man with no more manners than a pole cat! That's what the women who heard you to-day think about you!"

And with that she turned, banged the gate, and hastened toward her house where, in turn, she banged the door. Jimmy, who had said

never a word, but had gradually withered into the farthest corner of his seat, said, "Whew! She likes me all right! I could tell that by what she said."

"Be you the man that made the speech in the court house?" asked the boy, as he climbed into the sleigh and started Bill into action.

"My son," said Jimmy, "I am that very unfortunate man. But you don't care, do you? You don't give a hang about voting, do you?"

"Not to-night," admitted the boy. "All I'm thinkin' about is how I'm to get that ten dollars. It's a lot of money, ten dollars is. And—and," he looked up at his companion rather speculatively, and added in a burst of boyish confidence—"I don't think you're so bad as that woman said, anyhow. I think I like you!"

Jimmy, feeling for the moment rather friendless, vented a fervent "Lord bless you, son! We'll keep on being friends."

It began to seem to Jimmy that he was in for a chapter of accidents and hardships. A snaffle gave away and they had to get out into the deep snow and make repairs with fingers that were cold before the operation was complete. They came to a stretch of unbroken road where the

snow was so deep that he had to climb out and break trail with the drift well above his knees.

They toiled along for another mile then Jimmy decided that it was rather a lonesome place; but philosophized that any place without either a crowd, or Mary Allen, would be lonesome, and then further cheered himself with the reflection that if he had Mary Allen with him he wouldn't miss the crowd, or that if he had a crowd he'd not for a moment miss Mary Allen, all of which made it rather a cheerful if paradoxical world. Now that he had escaped the clutches of the irate militants of Yimville, it wasn't such a bad predicament after all.

"Hello! What's that?" he exclaimed, sitting up with a jerk, as the boy pulled the reins and yelled a loud "Whoa, Bill!"

It seemed as if something had gone awry with the prow of their ship. They climbed out to investigate.

"They's a hame strap busted and Bill's loosin' all his furniture," explained the boy.

They got Bill's rig off to repair it as best they could. Again their fingers got cold and their feet got cold, and the air got colder. Bill was

the only one who didn't seem to mind the delay and acted as if he rather enjoyed a vacation.

"Now we're off again," said Jimmy, as they resumed their journey. "After all, breaking a hame strap's nothing. Bill gets extra feed for that. Anybody that can work hard enough to bust a hame strap has my approval. I never did. You see, son, it was in a way rather lucky, because I'd never have guessed what a good old nag Bill is if he hadn't proved it by snapping that strap! People most always get acquainted through accident. I certainly made a lot of acquaintances to-day! Also a lot of people got acquainted with me who might never, never, never have really known just what I was like!"

This pleasant reflection occupied his time for another mile, and then suddenly Bill stumbled, his head went down and his heels flew up, he seemed to stand on his neck for an instant, and then became a kicking, obstreperous heap of horse and harness on the snow.

"Hooray!" shouted Jimmy, again springing into action. "Hooray! I'll sit on his head, son, while you see how many pieces you can unfasten in his harness. Keep away from his heels. Tackle his belly band first. That's the ticket!

Now see if you can get the tugs loose. Got 'em? Now stand back. William, arise!! Whoo-e-e! Come up like baking powder or patent yeast, don't you, Old Sport? There! There! Steady now. You're all right. Concentrate your thoughts on food and it'll ease your mind. I've tried it."

They restored Bill to his harness and backed him into the shafts.

"Now everything's all right again," said Jimmy, quite happily. "Just think what tough luck it would have been if he'd broken his neck. It doesn't pay to drive a horse with a broken neck. Just a waste of time. Never buy a horse with a broken neck, son, unless you are in the tallow business."

"Bill's all right, but—but—there seems to be somethin' wrong with the shaft on this side. It wobbles," said the driver.

Jimmy went around to the other side and inspected it.

"Humph! Does wobble," he admitted. "It's cracked. However, that's all right. Just think how bad it would have been if it had broken in two. Now, as it is, maybe it'll last till we get to Mountain City, and I'll pay for a new one. You

see, partner, all these little things are sent to try our fortitude and philosophy."

Again they moved ahead, and Jimmy whimsically homilized that it wasn't how a shaft looked or felt that counted, but whether it did its work. "Why, if everybody in this world who is cracked was chucked aside as useless, I reckon there'd be mighty few folks left to do things," he insisted. "There'd be milk without crocks, and jobs without men; girls without sweethearts and churches without bells, son. Being cracked isn't a sin, it's just being common!"

"Whoa! Whoa, Bill! She's busted for good now, Mister!"

The damaged shaft had snapped ominously and the harassed Bill this time threatened to kick the whole exasperating outfit to kindling wood if his heels held out long enough to accomplish such a worthy job.

"I'm getting used to this snow, now; I like it!" asserted Jimmy, as he again got out to make an inspection. "We folks from Maryland always did appreciate snow. It makes us understand the general air of chilliness that seems to hover around New England Yanks. Well, looks as if we'd have to steal a fence rail somewhere, boy,

if we wish to continue this delightful journey. Ah, there's a nice old stake-and-ridered layout over there. I always knew they were the best kind of fences for country roads. They do come in handy, all right. You hold William and explain things to him while I grab one."

He waded into a ditch where the snow was waist high, floundered up a bank, and selected a fairly straight fence rail that would serve his purpose, and wallowed back with it. Once he fell and got snow up his sleeves as high as his elbows.

"Now some folks would swear that was cold and uncomfortable," he remarked as he shook it out in chunks, "but I like it, because I know it's clean. It'd be awfully good in a cocktail just about now! Snow? Why I've known time in a jay town down in Louisiana when I'd have cried with joy for anything as cool as that to put in even plain water. 'We never appreciate our blessings till we get 'em,' as the Mormon said just before his seventeen wives swung him up on the limb of a tree."

For a time he watched Bill struggling along dejectedly, but was glad that his improvised shaft support served and contemplated the pas-

sage of time that must intervene before they reached Mountain City. And then Bill again stumbled, and stopped as if in despair.

"I think maybe his feet's balled up," suggested the boy.

Jimmy climbed out and lifted Bill's extremities, hoof by hoof, patiently digging off the snow stilts with his pocket knife, until at last he found one hoof with a shoe missing.

"Well, well, well! No wonder you stumbled, old fellow," he sympathized. "Cast a shoe, have you? Must have been back there where you fell! That's too bad. You can't wear one of mine, or you'd be welcome. Must have another put on up in Mountain City. Don't mention the expense. My firm's rich. We often give horse shoes away on Christmas—paper ones, you know!"

And the faithful and valiant Bill, relieved of one shoe and four big collections of snow, hobbled forward again until he came to the foot of a hill that seemed to stretch clear to the moon, and then for the first time acted as if he had given up entirely and succumbed to misfortune.

"How far is Mountain City, now, son?" asked Jimmy, not without some betrayal of anxiety.

"It's right up on top of that hill," said the boy, "But that hill's just one mile and a half long."

"Good!"declared Jimmy, "you sit here and steer the beast, and I'll get out and help and encourage him by leading him. I always was fond of wading in snow. Cools off one's temper, walking in the snow does. If every man who lost his temper had to walk a mile and a half uphill through the snow, before he could say or do anything else, there would never be a murder in this world, no divorces, and—by gosh!—maybe no marriages either. That would be a calamity. Snow certainly does cool one off."

An hour later when, after frequent rests and short but strenuous efforts, they halted at the top of the hill and saw the main street of Mountain City ahead of them, Jimmy said to the boy as he climbed back, panting, into the sleigh, "Son, we learn by experience; but it's only the wise and experienced man who knows that ignorance is bliss. There's a lot of things in this life that I don't want to know anything at all about in the future. Alpine climbing; politics, and votes for women are all off my list. The only things I'd like to investigate are warm drinks, hot grub, and the insides of a pair of dry

socks, shoes and breeches! And with that knowledge I'd be content. If you can find the way to the hotel without straying, I'll forgive you for what you didn't know about the way up here, and we'll begin all over again. Once more we're on our merry way!"

Evidently Judge Granger was unknown to the hotel keeper of Mountain City, for no comment was made on Jimmy's arrival and the place seemed warm, comfortable, and luxurious after the snow drifts of the mountains. Jimmy first phoned the railway station where he learned that Number Sixteen was still belated but was expected through by midnight. Inasmuch as Bad Fortune had been conquered by optimism, Good Fortune now smiled upon the optimist. He purchased dry underwear, dry shoes, and dry trousers for himself, and astonished the boy who had so valiantly supported him by the presentation of a new suit of clothes, new red flannel underwear, and new shoes.

"Lord! It'd never do for me to send you back home sniffling with a cold," he explained to the lad. "Your maw would never forgive me, and —I reckon I've got enough enemies amongst the women of this locality without adding her to

my list. Heaven help me if ever I go back there again! They'd boil me alive in a soap kettle, and feed my fat to the pigs! Now we shall look after the requirements of Rosinante, my little Sancho Panza. Then we shall eat."

By liberal payment he succeeded in inducing the village wagon maker to put in a new shaft that night, and the village blacksmith immediately took on the work of replacing the lost shoe. Then he inspected the stable where Bill was to sleep, bought a full bale of clean straw, a double quantity of oats, and induced the hostler to give Bill an extra rub and an extra blanket.

"Nothing's too good for us to-night, son," he explained to his admiring supporter. "I feel like going on a bat. Just the same as Daniel probably did after he got out of the lion's den. I'll bet ten to one that the first thing he said after they hoisted him out was to ask the king what he'd have to drink. Hospitality, my boy, is the guarantee of appreciation. Both those who give and those who accept are satisfied, which is unlike nearly all other bargains made in this world. This is applicable to everything except jails. Remember my preachments after I am

gone, and you'll never get into the latter—that is—if you can run fast enough!"

They still tell, in that hotel, of the meal he had specially prepared to celebrate his escape from the Philistines. Long before it was through the boy was speechless.

"Gee! Can't eat any more," he declared after a third piece of hot mince pie.

"What's the matter? New suit of clothes too tight? Well, son, here's another piece of advice," said Jimmy, as he helped himself. "Trouser bands aren't made of rubber because all tailors are rich men who never get hungry. By leaning toward the table and pretending to fool with your serviette, it's easy to open the top buttons under your vest without anybody noticing that you're going to make a fresh start. This is a form of politeness that is necessary lest you alarm your host. Always do it that way, and in the meantime, if you can think of one, tell a funny story. It serves to distract attention from what you're doing, which is the success of all card tricks, sleight-of-hand performances, and getting a tummy full. Also that is probably the reason why napkins are worn in the lap instead of in the neckband of your collar. Incidentally

I see there is a neglected raisin sticking to your chin, which leads me to further observe that food is worn inside and not outside your face. That's right! Don't waste it! I knew you wouldn't!"

He stopped suddenly, looked at his watch and said, "Great Scott! I forgot one thing! How late does the Emporium keep open? Nine o'clock? Oh, then I've got time. I must telephone Mister—Umm-m-mh!—Wade, did you say his name was?"

The boy looked alarmed, but Jimmy explained. "You see he expected you back to-night. He didn't know how bad the roads were. I must tell him you'll not be back before to-morrow morning. What's the 'phone number? 37? Good. I'll go now and tell him. You stay here until I come back. We're going to have coffee."

Jimmy hastened out to the 'phone and was thankful that it was conveniently placed in a cabinet, for he was rather uncertain what might be said, or, indeed, whether the telephone might not explode from heat generated at the other end of the line. He got Wade without difficulty, and again Fortune smiled.

"Mr. Wade," he said in his customary cheerful voice, "I made an address at the court house this afternoon, and—er—the exigencies of my departure led me to commandeer the services of your delivery boy, Tim, I think his name is. What's that?"

He stopped, puzzled for the moment by the loud burst of laughter from the other end of the line, and then a question, cautiously uttered as if the speaker were afraid of being overheard, "Where are you, Judge?"

"Mountain City Hotel."

"Oh, up there, eh? Glad you got away safely. I heard that you were last seen eloping with Tim and my nag Bill. And—can you hear me?—Yes?—well, secretly I was tickled to death that you got away! This thing of votes for women—you understand! Glad you handed it out straight. Of course I can't say so out loud, but——"

"Thanks!" said the relieved Jimmy. "I'm sending Tim and Bill back in the morning. Also I'd like to give Tim an envelope with a ten dollar note in it to pay for the use of the rig if you'll accept it."

"S-s-s-h!" came back over the telephone.

"Don't say a word! I'll not have it! You can pay the keep for the boy and horse up there. That's all I'll accept. That and a promise that you'll not give me away! It wouldn't do for me to let it be known that—you understand, Judge!"

And Jimmy left the telephone box in an extraordinary good humor and sauntered back to his coffee.

He insisted on inspecting the room that he had engaged for his guest, and extravagantly ordered a fire for it. He insisted on his guest retiring, but the guest, reduced to a state of adoration, rebelled and saw him off when the train pulled out from Mountain City at 11:30 that night.

Mr. James Gollop settled himself comfortably into a seat therein and emitted a great sigh of content.

"As the copy book used to say at school," he thought, "'Count that day lost whose low descending sun, views o'er thy work without some worthy person done.' And if in one place in his bailiwick I haven't fried that codfish Granger to a crisp, it's not because I haven't been industrious. I've been as busy as a horse with a wooden leg trying to win the Derby!"

CHAPTER VIII

RECOVERING his luggage at the junction with the main line, and traveling an additional forty miles after such a strenuous day, predisposed the indefatigable Mr. Gollop for a long night's rest. Finding himself again in a modern little city with a first class hotel, and a luxurious bed aided the ministrations of nature, so that it was after ten o'clock in the morning when he whistled his way to his bath and then carefully selected a clean outfit for the day's work. He hummed like a particularly lucky hummingbird while he shaved, and felt like hoppity-skipping down to the grill room, where his healthy appetite might have full play. He found himself a nicely cushioned alcove through whose window he could look out on the clear, brilliant morning with its dazzle of snow, and at the same time luxuriate in the steam heated atmosphere within. The world seemed turning very well and happily, as far

as Mr. James Gollop could observe and feel, and he gave his order and was rendered grateful when an excellently trained waiter laid before him the morning papers. And then Mr. Gollop sat up and grinned with the culminating joy of the morning!

The paper he had first glanced at was rabidly Democratic and sported a huge headline completely across the front page which read:

"Gubernatorial Candidate Mobbed in Yimville."

Then followed a series of banks and subheads:

"Loses temper and offers insults to women voters! Excoriates his own profession whilst in violent temper and ridicules bench of which he is member! Admits that all he seeks is office. After amazing outburst, proving unfitness for any public trust, narrowly avoids tar and feathers and escapes. Present whereabouts unknown."

Special passages from the now famous speech were carefully selected, duly edited to make

them sound the worst, and printed in black-faced pica. Other passages in the speech were in italics. The whole plant of the newspaper had been utilized to give adequate expression to this unparalleled forensic outburst. A much garbled report "in full" was given of the wording, and as lurid yellow as was ever mixed went to make up the account of the incidents in Yimville. According to the report the mob numbered thousands and strong men of both parties wept and gnashed their teeth in their frantic craving to wreak vengeance on the orator for the insults offered to their mothers, wives, daughters, and sweethearts. Indignant women, forgetting the softness of sex, had arisen in just wrath to execute this brazen-faced apostle of mammon. Half a column was devoted to the mystery of the Judge's disappearance from the scene and it was stated that he was believed to have terrorized a boy into driving him away into the mountains, in which case, it was feared, owing to the blizzard, that unless they found refuge in some isolated farm house they might have perished. Jimmy noticed that most of the concern expressed by the newspaper was for the welfare of the boy. He was chuckling gleefully

to himself when interrupted by the return of the waiter.

"Pity they didn't get that buzzard and hang him, isn't it, sir?" he commented indignantly.

"It certainly is," agreed Jimmy.

"Not as I believe in votes for women myself," added the waiter, "but I don't believe in openly insultin' 'em in public. And think of the likes of him sayin' as all he wanted was to get elected and as if he didn't care how! Why he ought to be in that Tammany Hall gang back in New York! That's the only place in all this United States, I reckon, where folks stand for that sort of stuff. It's understood back there that all they want is a fat job and the people be damned, but people out here ain't educated up to looking at things that way. They ain't any people in the world that'd stand for what them people in New York does! I worked there one time for about three year and I know. I'll bet that galoot murdered that boy. Probably took him as far as he wanted to, then threw the poor little feller out of the sled into the snow to freeze. All that they'll ever find of that poor little kid'll be an icicle."

"I'll bet you're right!" agreed Jimmy, again,

vociferously. "This paper says the Judge said some nasty things about Union Labor. I should think some of you chaps would start something on what Union Labor thinks of him and his kind."

"By jingoes! You're right about that!" the waiter declared, and then added, as if overcome by the brilliant opportunity for advertising himself, "I'm president of the local Waiters' Union, and I'll lay off this afternoon and look after that myself. We'll show them that thinks they can knock us a thing or two before we've done with 'em! Down on honest labor, is he? And he thinks he can get elected if all of us is agin' him!"

Jimmy read a column on the weather in which it was stated that the storm was the most unprecedented in twenty years and that on nearly all the branch lines, where wires were down and a snow blockade complete, conditions would have to remain as they were until traffic was restored on the main trunks; but that the railway company hoped to clear the branch lines within twenty-four hours, and that already telephone and telegraph linemen were out on snow shoes.

At four o'clock that afternoon Jimmy boarded

the train bound for the last city he would visit in the state, and attracted by the cries of a newsboy, "All about Judge Granger! Latest news from Yimville," bought a paper and settled himself down to read.

The latest advices from the scene of his latest escapade told of the return of Tim. They were published in a Republican paper which began by stating that the reports of the Judge's speech were mangled distortions of what the speaker had, in his well known eloquent manner, expressed, or deliberate lies manufactured by his enemies; that there had been no riot at all, and that neither had there been a demonstration save a small uproar created by a branch of the Militant Suffragettes, headed by that modern prototype of Carrie Nation and her hatchet, the state leader of that body, whose previous records of disturbances were sufficient in themselves to convince all thoughtful-minded women, as well as men, that probably the speaker was justified in whatever he had said to this professional heckler. Furthermore, as evidence of the depths to which a totally unscrupulous and irresponsible press could descend in its efforts to ridicule a great leader, the whole story of flight was,

from the beginning to end, a malicious controversion of fact. This was proven by the statement of the driver, Timothy Jones, who had that morning returned to Yimville. The driver was known as completely trustworthy and honest, and, furthermore, his statements were fully corroborated by his employer, Mr. Wade, general manager of the Emporium, one of the most prominent business men in that part of the state.

Judge Granger, after making a most eloquent, lucid, and brilliant speech which had been unduly prolonged by his patience in replying to questions addressed by the disturbing element, had found his time for boarding the regular train so curtailed that he had but a few minutes in which to reach the station. He had very courteously asked young Jones if he could drive him thither, there having been an unfortunate lack of foresight in providing an equipage for his return. Jones drove him to the station, where, to the Judge's distress, he learned that, owing to the storm, there would be no train through for an indefinite time. Having other highly important engagements, he found it necessary to drive to Mountain City, where he

could be more certain of catching a train near midnight.

"All those who are familiar with the great punctiliousness and responsibility of Judge Woodworth-Granger will therefore not be surprised to learn that, despite all the fatigues of the day, and the hardships of such traveling, he courageously braved the blizzard, fearless in his sense of duty to be performed. That he made such a difficult night drive merely to keep his pledged word and engagements, when others might have quailed, or accepted the storm as sufficient excuse for remaining comfortably in shelter, is in itself a sufficient tribute to the sterling worth of this distinguished man's character. He must have inherited from those ancesters of his, who with bleeding feet trudged through the snows of Valley Forge, some of that patriotism and high fealty to duty which has ever been the stamp of the true American. This courageous self-sacrifice to public duty alone is sufficient evidence that he is the man to guide the destinies of one of the greatest states in the Union, and those who are to meet in convention for the choice of a leader will do well to reflect upon what must be considered as a sterling

achievement bespeaking the character of this honored and distinguished jurist who has somewhat reluctantly yielded to the demands of his fellow citizens. Those who mendaciously accused him of office seeking, should hide their heads for shame. Failing to find a single flaw in the private, public, or professional life of this distinguished man, his political enemies now seek by ridicule and innuendo to attack him. To such depths as these has the Democratic party in this state fallen. Had there ever been the slightest doubt that the Hon. J. Woodworth-Granger will be the nominee for governor of this state, it is now dissipated by the scurrilous attack made upon him—an attack of desperation that must and shall inevitably bring its own reward. Verily a man is known by the enemies he makes!"

After reading this editorial Jimmy reverted to the news page where the faithful Tim's defense was given. It was eulogistic. It was colorful. It told of the vicissitudes of the trip, although it neglected to mention the episode of losing their way and what was said by the farmer's wife. Jimmy thought that either Tim or the reporter who wrote the alleged interview

had shown tact in that suppression. But it was beautifully written! There was no doubt of that. Stinging sleets, biting winds, desperately fatigued horses, valiant and persistent battles with snow drifts, icy cold temperatures and everything pertaining to heroism in the Arctics were there.

"Tim and I have got Scott, Peary and Admunsen all looking like a lot of pikers!" thought Jimmy as he read. "If the fellow who wrote this can write stuff as warm, comforting and appetizing on chocolates as he can about coldness, courage and cramps on that trip to Mountain City, he'll make a world-beater in the advertising line! He's a whirlwind—no—a cyclone—when it comes to throwing the guff."

The interview told of the great man's magnanimity and generosity. Not even his solicitude for old Bill's comfort was overlooked. In fact the great man wouldn't trust the hostler, but fed Bill bran mash with a spoon. The suit of clothes he bought "Mister Timothy Jones" was lined with silk. The underwear might have been of red gold instead of red flannel. Thus did a brave man reward those who served him in time of stress. It even intimated that Timothy

Jones might retire for life on his monetary rewards.

It was the next day at luncheon when the cheerful James was given reason to think less happily of his exploit, and to wonder what happened to a worm that turned once too often. The newspapers contained the statements that the wires were now open to Princetown and that in that flourishing city dwelt a man whose feelings were outraged, who was indignant, who asserted he had not been in Yimville on the day of the speech, in fact had never in his life made a speech in Yimville, and that if he had made a speech in Yimville he most certainly would not —never, never, never—have expressed the sentiments so brazenly attributed to him. He was an office seeker in the interests of public rather than personal welfare, and for no other reason. He had yielded to the overwhelming petitions of his friends, indeed, not without considerable pain. And then Jimmy read something that for the first time caused him to appreciate the possible grave consequences of his ebullient imposture:

"'I am not at the moment in a position to

make any definite and specific charges,' his Honor told the representative of the *Morning Star:* 'but I have certain well-defined grounds for believing that the citizens of Yimville, for whom I have the most profound respect and admiration, knowing that they include some of the most intellectual and patriotic ladies and gentlemen in the whole of the United States, have been imposed upon by an individual who (I have been told) faintly resembles me as far as personal appearance is involved. Yet how this person, who is, I regret to say, but a common, vulgar ignoramus, could have the barefaced effrontery to address an intelligent audience either in his own or an assumed character, I can not comprehend. Needless to say I shall at once take steps to learn the truth, and the impostor shall be made to suffer the extreme penalties of the law providing for the punishment of such flagrant acts against the public and private welfare of duly constituted citizens. The world must be made safe for Democracy. Those who are guilty of lack of observance for those common and well-defined and closely stipulated rules that govern the intercourse existing between individuals or those collections of in-

dividuals which are in turn by mutual consent formed into comities, must hereafter be consistently regulated by those able to dictate either by force of arms or the divine influence of reason, until they can no longer prove a menace to the rules governing, by consent of the governed and the voice of the governed, human relations in general, in particular, and in private.' "

Jimmy pondered over the last sentence a long time.

"I suppose he means 'The guilty shall be punished,' " he said, and then added, admiringly, "By gosh! If he were a Democrat he'd be president of the United States yet. He surely would! He can use more words to say less than any other man living, and, come to think of it, he has the greatest assets of stupidity, which are pompous silence, and a patronizing grin. The art of so obfuscating his expression with words that neither his friends nor his enemies can come to any positive conclusion as to what he means. But if I'm not mistaken, this same J. Woodworth-Granger, Judge by election, is after the scalp of one James Gollop, drummer for a living, and—humph!—wonder when the next train

leaves that will take me out of this state's jurisdiction? It seems to me, Jim, that you should be on your way. Good Lord! Some men can never take a joke! The idea of raising such a fuss over a little thing like that!"

And, so potent was his increasing apprehension, Mr. James Gollop did not actually smile again until seven-thirty that evening, when he received a reply to a question addressed to the conductor of the eastbound train.

"Are we over the state line yet?" was the question asked.

"By about thirty miles, I should reckon," was the reply.

"Thank heaven for that!" said Mr. Gollop, resuming a placid mental attitude, and the celebrated Gollop grin. "It's a wise man who knows where he's not welcome. Both celebrity and notoriety are distinctions to be shunned. A mud-cat is the most secure of all fish because nobody wishes to either catch and eat, or play with and caress him. His sole virtue is his obscurity, the sharpness of his bones his only protection. I'd rather be a catfish than a salmon after all!"

And the conductor, passing on his way with his nickel-plated lantern deftly anchored by his

arm and his nickel-plated punch industriously working in his hand, mumbled, "Happy man! He's got just what he wants. Wish I was general passenger agent of this line. I'm not a catfish because I want to be one. He seems to be—just that!"

CHAPTER IX

JIMMY retired to the smoking compartment in the Pullman and sat down to think it all over. It had but one other occupant, a huge man with heavy shoulders who lowered the paper he had been reading and looked at Jimmy through a pair of clear, gray, appraising eyes that conveyed such a sense of directness as to slightly disconcert one with a guilty conscience.

"Great Scott!" thought Jimmy. "Hope he's not a sheriff or a United States marshal looking for me," and then indulged in an inward smile at the absurdity of his being of sufficient importance to have a federal officer on his trail. He seated himself and took a furtive glance at the man's face. It was a distinctly attractive face, due to its marked indications of character. It expressed not only firmness and intelligence but a sense of humor. Jimmy decided that this individual should appreciate a joke and wondered who he was.

"Funny old chap," he thought. "Might be a banker, but I think he's a drummer. Wonder who he's out for? Somehow he's mighty familiar; but surely I'd never forget an old Trojan like that. Maybe I've met him sometime, and he's got all that gray around his temples since then. Gray hairs do make a difference."

He was still puzzling over this lost identity when the man laid the newspaper to one side, lighted a fresh cigar and, turning toward Jimmy, said, "Funny about that affair over in Yimville, isn't it? Have you read about it?"

Jimmy had to look away lest the twinkle in his eyes betray him, and then decided his best policy would be to take it with a laugh. A laugh he decided was the most disarming of human manifestations. He emitted one.

"Yes, I read about it in the papers yesterday and to-day. That fellow at Yimville does seem to have kicked up an amusing controversy. One set of papers says he was mobbed, and the other that he made a hit. But—pshaw!—of course it has no effect whatever on Judge Granger's chances for the nomination! Tempest in a child's teapot that will last about as long."

"Perhaps! I'm not to sure about that. More-

over, I'm not so certain that Granger, unmolested, could have got the nomination. He would have been up against a good stiff fight. I understand that he's a trifle too self-satisfied to be a very popular candidate. Nothing hurts a man with a swelled head like ridicule. Ridicule will trim men that can't be touched with any other weapon under the sun. And—" he chuckled as if amused—"the whole state has something to laugh over now, whether he made that speech, or whether he didn't!"

The man looked out of the window for a moment and then, as if no longer interested in the Yimville episode, inquired, "Didn't I see you getting some sample cases aboard the train? What's your line?"

"Chocolates. Columbus Chocolate Co. of New York. Are you on the road?"

"Well, not exactly. I'm in water power plants at present."

"Something I don't know much about," said Jimmy. "But I wish I did. Mighty interesting. In fact I never took the trouble to look one over until a little while ago."

"Where was that?" inquired the man.

"Up at a place called Princetown. Good

water power there. Big plant, I suppose you would call it."

"Yes, I suppose they have good power up there. I have heard so," said the man, inspecting the ash of his cigar as if interested in how long it would last without breaking. "Let's see —automobile factory there, isn't there?"

"Yes. Sayers Automobile Company. Fine cars, too, but unknown except out here. At least I should say so. That's the trouble with half the enterprises in the country. They can make first class articles but they can't sell them. Sometimes I think we Americans aren't such good hustlers after all. We've got the reputation in Europe, I am told, of blowing about our stuff; but I'm not certain that we do. If I were a manufacturer, I'd not make anything that wasn't the best I could make. I'd put everything I knew and everything I could learn into whatever I made. I'd not have a man work for me fifteen minutes if he didn't believe that it was the best thing of its kind on earth. And then I'd know that when that man went out and talked about my line of goods, whether he was a salesman or not, he'd swear that it was the best on earth."

The man smiled, "In other words, even your workmen blowing, eh?"

"I don't think it's blowing to say what you honestly believe about your line. When a man is absolutely convinced that he is offering the very best thing on the market and gets hot under the collar if anybody questions it, he becomes a good salesman. He never can be that unless he is honestly positive that he is talking truth. Telling the truth isn't boasting. It's the way to sell goods. Blowing means ignorance or lying. A man can not lie about anything he has to sell—if it's nothing bigger than hairpins—and get away with it very long. I never lie about my line—never! I really believe that some of our stuff is the best of its kind made. I say so. I honestly admit it when some other house brings out a certain line that beats ours, and then I hustle back home and put on my spurs, and get out my hammer, and try to get my firm to see it, and to meet the new stuff and if possible to go it one better."

Jimmy had forgotten all about Yimville, now that he was expatiating on a pet hobby of his. Evidently, too, Yimville had passed from the

mind of his companion, who seemed pondering over salesmanship.

"But—but how would it be applicable to power plants?" he demanded.

"I don't know," admitted Jim, "but the principle is the same for chocolates, or power plants or—automobiles. That's what started me off—those Sayers automobiles. I never heard about that car until I saw one in the street. I don't know anything about them. But the one I saw looked so pretty that I talked with the man who owned it, and he was in love with the thing. So, because I never heard of it, and no one else seemed to have done so, it proves that there's something wrong with the Sayers selling organization. They haven't handled their capital right, because every dollar invested in advertising is a dollar in the value of the plant—in that intangible asset called 'good-will,' without which neither a house nor a man can succeed."

"Young man," said his companion, "you are in the wrong line. You ought to be selling advertising space. I told you I was in power plants but—I'm in some other things as well.

Did you ever solicit advertising contracts for any first class advertising firm?"

"I never did," admitted Jimmy, "But I have given some advice about advertising that has paid the purchasers. And I've pondered over sales organization for years. I tell you—it's a science! If ever I get a chance to test these theories of mine—I'll——" He paused as if ashamed of his serious enthusiasm, and as usual, derided them—"I'll probably fail!"

"Why deride yourself?" queried the man, regarding Jim with grave and interested eyes. "If sales organization is a hobby of yours, why not ride it? Evidently you've thought about it somewhat. What is wrong with the average sales organization? Where does it fail? What improvements can you suggest in prevalent methods? Have you thought of anything new and original to improve them? If so, I'd like to hear about it, because I'm one of those who are never too old to learn."

Jimmy accepted and launched into his argument with all the vim of an enthusiast discussing a subject to which he had given thought.

"Have you got one of your personal cards

with you? Hope you don't think I'm impertinent," said the man, after Jimmy had run down.

Jimmy laughed and gave him the card and while he wondered what was coming next, his companion carefully slipped it into his pocketbook.

"If ever you decide to get out of chocolates," he said, thoughtfully, "you might call on me—or—let's see! Here!" He took another card from his pocket just as the train came to a stop and the porter came hurrying in and shouted, "Sorry, sah! Done forgot to call you sooner. Corinth!"

Both Jim and his fellow traveler jumped to their feet and hastened out. Jimmy saw that the card was that of "Mr. Charles W. Martin, Suites 105-7-9-11 Z, Flat Iron Bldg., New York. Specialist in everything pertaining to power plants."

Out on the platform Martin asked, "Where do you stop here in Corinth, Mr. Gollop?"

"At the City Hotel," said Jimmy. "Good sample rooms there. Good grub. Good beds."

"I think I'll go there, too," said Martin, and together they entered the hotel bus and were driven away.

As usual Jimmy was welcomed by his first name, and informed that there was some mail there for him. When he looked around from its perusal Martin had disappeared and he did not meet him again until he was seated in a corner of the restaurant alone, when a voice behind him said, "Hope you don't mind if I join you, Mr. Gollop," and looked up to see his traveling companion.

"Not at all, Mr. Martin," he replied. "Always glad to have good company. I'm a sociable sort of cuss myself. I detest traveling alone, eating alone, or loafing alone. I suppose I'm gregarious."

A troubled, thoughtful shadow chased itself over the elder man's face, as he said, with a half-sigh, "I understand. It's not good for a man to be alone. And the older he becomes, the more he feels lonesomeness, and the more he wants—home!"

The word was the magic one for Jimmy. Somehow that word always moved him and brought out his great undercurrent.

"Why, do you know," he said, leaning across the table with shining eyes, "if I didn't have a home to go to, always, after I've made my round,

I'd be like a horse that had been robbed of his stall? I live for it! I work for it! I look forward to it all the time! But you see, I'm different than most men. Luckier, I think, because my mother's there! And if I didn't have a thing in the world but her, I'd be rich. And if I had everything else but her, I'd be poor! I'm mighty proud of my home and my mother. I shall be leaving here for home to-morrow afternoon," continued Jimmy. "After I've hustled around and seen about a dozen customers. Being a drummer and having a craze for home, are two pretty tough propositions to combine. But—what would home be without chocolates? Why, do you know, I don't think I'd have been able to have a home at all without 'em! By chocolates Maw and I live or die. Funny, isn't it, that if there was an earthquake that wiped a spot off the maps and hurt me when I read about it, I'd keep going on just about the same; but if everybody stopped eating chocolates, I'd be wiped off the map, and I reckon the world would be going on just the same? Sometimes I think every man's world is the smallest thing there is because it's bounded only by his own happiness or tragedy. He's just one of billions,

but if his pet dog dies, he's astonished because the universe isn't covered with gloom and probably he's the only one that's sorry about the dog, or that even knows the dog has croaked. Maybe somebody else hears about it and is glad—the chap that the dog bit the week before he went to dog-heaven. But—anyhow—I'm bound for home to-morrow. Back to Baltimore, as the song goes."

"Baltimore?" said Martin. "That's a coincidence! I go to Baltimore myself to-morrow. Struthers people. Know them? Make tools of precision."

"Everybody in Baltimore knows of them," declared Jim with full civic pride.

"I shall take the two-thirty train," said Martin. "Maybe we shall travel together."

"That's the one I take," said Jim. "Match you to see who engages berths for both of us."

"I'll gladly engage one for you without matching," declared Martin, a proffer which Jim immediately accepted.

They lounged together that evening, and the more Jimmy knew of Martin, the better he liked him. There was something homely and sane about the man that appealed to him. For a time

he kept subconsciously questioning why he maintained a peculiar feeling that this was not the first time they had met; yet this sense of unrest was dissipated by the respect he had formed for him, quite unaccountably. He was, indeed, surprised with himself for his liking when he realized how satisfactory it was to have Martin sharing his journey on the following day. In his perpetual journeyings he had met many men who were congenial, men of the good-fellow type, but here was a man who had but little of the customary "goodfellow" attributes and habits, and who yet won his regard. There was the disparity of ages, the contrast of taciturnity with free expression, and a large lack of mutual experience; but somehow all these barriers were not supervened to the detriment of their fellowship. Jim felt as if he were with an acquaintance—most friendly too—of years standing, long before they arrived at Baltimore.

"Perhaps you can recommend me to a good hotel," said Martin, as they neared their destination. "I've never stopped in Baltimore. In fact, I'm a total stranger there."

"Why stop at a hotel at all?" suggested Jimmy, generously. "Why not come out and

put up with me? My mother's the finest there is! We're pretty plain people, but it ought to beat being in a hotel. I'll have three days home this time, and I'll show you down to Struthers' place, and—by jingoes!—you shall be introduced to big Bill, my pet tree, in his winter clothes, and if I can't make you believe in Maryland hospitality, it won't be my fault."

Martin accepted as directly as he appeared to decide everything. And the beauty of it was that Mrs. Gollop, who shared her son's hospitable nature, accepted and made welcome the guest that Jimmy brought home as if she were thoroughly accustomed to her son's unconventional methods.

"Does he always bring strangers home like this?" asked Martin, with a faint smile, on the second day of his visit after Jim's mother had been eloquently expatiating on Jim's idiosyncrasies and virtues during the latter's temporary absence.

"You never can tell what Jimmy will do," she replied with a laugh, and then thoughtfully stared through her window into the street. "But I am always certain that he will do the honest, decent, and generous action. He laughs his way

through the world, but in the laugh is never malice nor cruelty. His sole failing is that he cannot resist a joke. He has always been so. His sense of the ridiculous is absurdly out of proportion to his serious side. I used to feel hopeless for his future because he laughed so much; but now I know the difference. One may still laugh and be loyal in all things. He has no false ideas or unattainable ambitions. He has no false pride. He believes in doing his best in all things. He is sorry for those who are unfortunate, and unenvious of those who have succeeded. He is sincere, and he is unassuming, a good friend, and a tolerant enemy. His tastes are simple, his pleasures homely."

She stopped, flushed and, added, "But I boast too much! Yet I can't help it because—well—because there has never been such a son as mine, and I'm not ashamed to feel proud of him!"

But Mr. Martin was now looking out of the window, and, Mr. Martin did not smile.

CHAPTER X

AT the end of three days, Mr. Martin, professing much gratitude and pleasure for the hospitality shown him, departed for the South. At the end of four days, Mr. Gollop, making the excuse of urgent business, entrained for New York. Not that Mr. Gollop, having regard for the *expressio falsi* as compared with the *suppressio veri,* was strictly a prevaricator or that he told the exact truth, because he had slipped four whole days up his sleeve for his own entertainment; four whole days in which he had not the slightest intention of visiting his firm; four whole days that he intended to devote to art research, and exploration—exploration of a wilderness known as MacDougall Alley. So accurately did he time his movements that he invaded MacDougall Alley at just eleven a. m., which he considered a proper hour to find an aspiring artist at work while the light was most perfect and amenable. He was not disappointed,

which he regarded as proof of acumen; but he was surprised by his surroundings. No bare-walled studio, this, but a rather luxurious place with a real rug on the floor, and real chairs to sit upon, and a cosy seat, and electric lights instead of bare boards, benches, charcoal brazier and tallow dips stuck in the necks of bottles blown for better contents.

"See here! What troubles you, Bill Jones? Have I done anything you didn't like?" demanded Mary Allen, as she extricated her thumb from the hole of a palette on which oil paints proved that she had forsaken for the moment her love of water colors.

"Why — why — I don't understand!" exclaimed Jimmy, helplessly.

"Don't understand? I thought you promised to write?"

"I did," admitted Jimmy; "but, you see, I was so busy and there were so many people to talk to in my most seductive manner, and there were so many things to be done, including people, that I clean overlooked it! I did! I confess. But— I'm going to be here now at least a week," he added hopefully, and not without insinuation.

"Hope you enjoy your visit," she said, and

added rather maliciously, "I am entirely engrossed in my work—this week."

He stared at her with a face as frankly dejected as that of a hurt boy; then, his ever-present bouyancy reasserting itself, queried, "That's good. By the way, do you ever use models?"

"Of course," she replied.

"Well, I've got nothing to do this week," he replied enthusiastically. "I'll sit for you as a study in Disappointment, Flat-busted, or Return from the Races. The title doesn't matter, because I'll be such an excellent study for any sort of man whose hopes have all been knocked flatter than a pancake."

"I know you can be gloomy enough when you wish to be," she said, relenting a trifle; "but you're the first man I ever had promise to write me a letter that I admitted I should welcome, and then had the impudence to forget me. The one thing a woman can't forget is to be forgotten."

Jimmy felt decidedly perturbed by this statement. He wondered what she would say if he boldly admitted that he had in reality forgotten her very name and where she came from, and

then followed it with a confession that since the first day he had met her in New York some months ago, he had made amends by thinking of her continuously throughout his spare time. But he did not dare. He feared banishment, and that, he concluded, desperately, would be worse than death. Something of his mental distress must have been observable, for the girl suddenly relented, smiled a trifle and then said, "Well, perhaps I can indulge myself—not you, understand?—by going somewhere."

She regained her palette, and turned toward her easel with a businesslike air, quite as if she were a painter for a livelihood, and said, "Now suppose you run along and let me work. You can come back here for me at—say—one o'clock, and take me to luncheon; that is—if you're not too busy!"

And Jimmy, transported with delight, made a vast pretense of business and hastened away, lest she change her mind. He had the wisdom to let well enough alone, and knew that time is the best medicine for annoyance. But he was there in MacDougall Alley,—just the same—with marvelous punctuality.

And there can be no question that he was a

master host when it came to luncheons, dinners, suppers, or midnight lunch counters. With him it was an art, cultivated to the highest point of efficiency. Moreover, timorous and fearful lest he blunderingly lose his advantages, he did not press his suit too far and, as a result, Mary Allen forgot his seeming neglect. There was but one embarrassing moment when, after a moment's silence she said, "Do tell me, is there anything at all new down home? Dad is so uncommunicative that he never has much to say about the town itself, and everyone else is too busy to write me."

"Nothing new that I noticed when I was there last," said Jimmy. "Of course, being on the road all the time I'm—well—I'm so busy that—ummmh! Isn't that our waiter? Some of those pears over there on that other table look good enough to eat and—wish we could get some strawberries! Do you like hot-house grapes?"

He might have gone through an entire horticultural catalogue, had not his roving eyes at that moment suddenly been arrested by something that caused them to open widely and fix themselves. The something was a keen-looking man seated at another table who was glaring at

time with a steady and highly interrogative look. For once Mr. James Gollop's cheery self-confidence deserted him and he was highly distressed; for the keen-faced man happened to be his employer and his employer up to that moment believed one James Gollop was out on the road some hundred or so miles from New York looking after the interests of the Columbus Chocolate Company. Jimmy recovered sufficiently to bow and the bow was somewhat frigidly acknowledged. Jimmy's wits worked fast—very fast.

"Pardon me, won't you please," he addressed Mary Allen; "but there is a man sitting over there to whom I wish to speak for just an instant. Got to make an appointment with him, and this is opportune."

"Certainly," replied the lady, and Jimmy got up, crossed to his employer, and without giving the latter a chance to say anything, thrust out his hand and said, "Howdydo, Mr. Falkner. Howdydo! Got in off the run early this trip and was coming down to see you as soon as I had lunch."

"Oh, you were, were you?" dryly remarked his "boss," and the unhappy Jimmy distinguished a tone of sarcasm. "Very kind of you, I'm sure.

We've been wanting to hear from you for several days. I'll expect you at just three o'clock this afternoon."

Stunned by this unusual lack of cordiality, Jim said, "Very well, sir, I'll be there," and with as much dignity as he could command, turned and walked back to his table, but wondered heavily, what on earth he had done; what was wrong; whether some prominent customer had gone bankrupt or if Falkner merely had a grouch.

"I thought you went to see a friend, but you look as if you had been talking with an undertaker," commented his guest.

"And that's just the way I feel about it," admitted Jimmy. "Because I've got to meet him at three o'clock this afternoon, and I had anticipated the pleasure of going somewhere with you."

"The mean old thing!" she exclaimed, impulsively, and Jimmy's heart bumped at the knowledge that she, too, was disappointed.

"But," he suggested, hopefully, "if I called for you at the studio at about six o'clock couldn't we dine together?"

And when she accepted his invitation with

unconcealed enthusiasm, his spirits again soared and he forgot even the baleful presence of Falkner for a time, and when he did remember him, discovered that his "kill joy" had gone.

Promptly at three o'clock he breezed into his firm's offices with all habitual cheeriness, exchanged a swift run of badinage with those he met, and was ushered into the manager's office. Falkner did not meet him with the customary smile of welcome.

"Well," he said, "you seem to have raised a devil of a row out West, and if you can offer any explanation at all for such conduct I'm prepared to listen to it before we go any further. If you think that's the kind of advertising a reputable firm wants you're about as poor a guesser as ever traveled on a mileage book."

"Why—why—what's up?" blurted Jimmy.

"What's up? You've got a nerve to ask that!" roared the manager, banging his fist on the top of his desk. "Here, look at these!"

He handed Jim a small sheaf of sheets consisting of letters and telegrams. The first was from a jobbing firm:

"Cancel order given your man Gollop. Sorry,

but entire board of directors are Republican and resent Yimville affair."

A second was from another firm which had been one of Jim's best customers and read:

"Advise Gollop not to make this territory again until Yimville affair blows over. Granger's supporters buzzing like live hornets."

A more portentous looking document bearing the heading of the "State Republican Committee Headquarters" bore the concise statement that unless an immediate, full, and public apology was forthcoming from one James Gollop for impersonating the Hon. J. Woodworth-Granger at an important political meeting in the city of Yimville were not immediately forthcoming, legal action would be taken for damages, on the ground of misrepresentation, false pretense and willful intent to damage the reputation and political career of one of the most distinguished men in the state. Another letter was a round robin, signed by several firms, demanding the immediate discharge of "that contemptible practical joker, James Gollop," and still

another was from no less person that the Judge of the Fourth District Court, in which what was said of the same James Gollop was enough to wither that unfortunate individual. Someone had sent a stack of newspaper clippings three inches in thickness, from which Jimmy gathered that it had taken but a day or two to pick up his trail and expose him beyond all possible dispute.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Jimmy, aghast, and wiping beads of perspiration from his forehead. "I didn't have any idea of kicking up such a fuss as that. I just blundered into a chance to have some fun with that pompous old rooster that hated me because we looked so much alike and——" In the midst of all his woes he could not suppress a laugh of amusement.

"So you still think it's a joke, do you?" snorted the irate manager, exasperated by this further evidence of irresponsibility. "Well, you'll not think so any longer. I'll attend to that. You turn your samples in and go to the cashier with your expense account. You're fired! Maybe you can understand that! Fired! F-I-R-E-D!"

"You needn't have troubled to spell it out," remonstrated Jimmy. "I get you. But—hang it all, man!—you might at least put me into some

new territory. I didn't mean anything by it. I'll admit I was a chump; but I can sell stuff, and you know it."

He stopped and stared at the floor with a face so frankly troubled and perplexed that the manager for the moment forgot his wrath. The boy in Jimmy Gollop was never more manifest than at that moment. There was something very appealing about him that Falkner could not fail to discern.

"Jimmy," he said, gravely, "I'm sorry, but it has to be done. What on earth made you such a fool? You must have been crazy!"

"I sort of reckon I must have been," admitted Jimmy, dolefully. "But—honestly!—I didn't mean to do any real damage to that old stiff Granger, and certainly not to the firm. The firm? Why Mr. Falkner, I've stuck up for it for nearly ten years because it has treated me white, and because it's an honest firm that makes honest goods. But—well—all I can do is to square matters up as best I can. You people have been very good to me. Very good and very kind. I've drawn your money and,—prospered, and so I'll write the public apology or confession, or whatever you call it, that those chaps

out there demand, and take all the blame. And I'll write to every customer that has communicated with you and tell 'em that, although I'm out and gone, the orders were solicited in good faith and that it's not fair to make you suffer for that fool joke of mine. I'm done with jokes of all sorts from now on. I'll do anything except this—I'll not write one word of apology to that man Granger!"

Falkner looked out of the window as if troubled, and then said, with a sigh of regret, "Well, Jim, I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. You're the best man we ever had out, and—by Jove!—I'll put that into writing so you can have something to show, and you can use me personally as a reference when you strike someone else for territory. But, mind you, I shall have to tell them confidentially the reasons why we had to let you go."

"Of course! That's only fair," said Jimmy, his sober common sense impelling him to this admission.

"And—when this tempest blows by, you can have any other territory that comes open, Jim," volunteered Falkner; "that is—provided that

you cut the jokes out. Surely you've had fun enough by now to last you a lifetime!"

"I have! I have!" assented Jimmy lugubriously. "I've played the biggest joke of all on myself. By heck! I've joked myself out of my own job, and that's the limit. Joe Miller never did that and Mark Twain, Josh Billings, Bill Nye and George Ade, none of 'em ever reached that height of humor. The only difference between us is that they got cash for their jokes, whereas all the pay I get is the boot and the chance to go yelping down the street with a washboiler tied to my tail. Well, if a fellow puts grease on the front door steps he shouldn't squeal if he forgets and falls down himself."

It was not until he stood outside the main entrance to the building that he had a full sense of homelessness. It was not until then that he knew what it meant to be without anchorage. It seemed to him that all of those who hurried past in the winter's twilight had something to do and that he alone was adrift. He alone had dipped into the depths of folly and he alone had proved irresponsible. And his employment just then meant much to him. Subconsciously, he had builded with such confidence. He was now

aware that he had based all upon a permanency of income that he had conceived to be fixed. His home, his mother's contentment, his dreams of winning life companionship with the only girl he had ever loved, seemed to have depended upon the employment he had lost. And now all was gone! Swept away. He was a most forlorn and melancholy optimist as he stood there in the early twilight of winter, confusedly considering his position.

"Well," he thought at last, "they can't keep a good man down," and then after a moment's further reflection added, "But they can give him an awful wallop!"

The staring eye of an illuminated clock reminded him that MacDougall Alley was some distance away and he suffered a peculiar mixture of sadness and gladness as he began his journey. It seemed to him that he was a different person from the James Gollop who had happily invaded MacDougall's artistic precincts that morning from the James Gollop who was now disconsolately making his way thither. That Gollop of the morning had been happy and bright because he had a job; but this Gollop of the evening, jobless, and with a black mark

against him that was too notorious to escape the amused attention of all possible employers in his line, was but a sad dog. It required conscious mental effort on his part to assume a cheerful demeanor when he climbed the studio stairs. He wished that he dared tell the "Candy Girl" all about it, but decided that it would be ungenerous to bother anyone else with his woes, and any indecision in this regard was ended before the evening was over because she was so frankly and unaffectedly happy that he hadn't the heart to say anything that might possibly mar it. Yet, even whilst they sat in a theater listening to a most cheerful musical comedy the sober and responsible side of his mind was weighing necessities. The first of these, he knew, must be economies; for he anticipated that it might be a considerable time before he could again be earning an income, and there was always the little home down in Baltimore and its occupant to be considered first, and his own pleasures must be relegated to a secondary place. He was therefore rather heartbroken, but firm in his final explanation that night as he parted from her in front of the Martha Putnam Hotel.

"That business session I had this afternoon,"

he said, trying to keep his voice from betraying his trouble, "has unfortunately upset all my plans. I can't have that little four days vacation I had been planning."

"What? How horrid!" exclaimed the girl. "I—I thought we were to——"

Her disappointment and distress were so manifest that Mr. James Gollop had a first-class fight with himself to keep from blurting out the truth there in the hotel rotunda and telling her that on the next morning he was starting on what promised to be a long hunt for employment. But he escaped such confession by saying that he had great hopes of returning to New York within a few days. In fact he actually predicted that it would be so. And after all, the only lie he told was embodied in that word "Return."

CHAPTER XI

MR. JAMES GOLLOP discovered in the course of the following three days that although most business men enjoy a joke, their sense of humor is so deficient that they don't care to combine jest and business. His ill-fame had preceded him, and in addition thereto, it was the off-season, and vacancies few.

"We'd like to have you, Jim," said one sales manager, "but the trouble is that we should want you to take up the territory where you are well known, and that, of course, is impossible."

Others told him to call later in the season. Others who would have given him samples were firms of such small caliber that he could not see any future, and several were willing to take him on commission sales only. The only thing that helped him was that prodigious store of optimism which impelled him after each rebuff to hope for a change just around the corner.

It was when he felt at rather low ebb that he

passed, rather disconsolately, the Flat Iron Building and remembered Martin. Having no other place to go, he decided to call upon that shrewd gentleman and gather from such a source of hard common sense fresh courage. He turned in through the big swinging door that let a gust of winter into each compartment as it whirled, trundled it around and belched it into the great hallway, and somewhat absent-mindedly collided with a man who was coming out.

"Hello! She bumps!" said Jimmy good-naturedly and then—"Why—why it's you, is it, Mr. Martin? I was just coming up to your offices to see if by chance you happened to be in."

There was no mistaking the heartiness of the hand grasp that caught his.

"Well, we can go up now," said Martin, cheerfully. "In fact, I've been thinking about you quite a lot. Been rather eager to see you again. But—hold on!—the office is anything but a confidential resort. Suppose you come with me to the Engineers' Club where we can have a nice quiet talk."

Jimmy, feeling as if he had at least one friend left in the world, readily accepted, and thought it rather lucky that they were the only men in

the club lounge room; felt that the chairs were very comfortable, and the atmosphere summery.

"How are things with you?" asked Martin shrewdly eyeing him through the first blue smoke screen of a cigar.

"Oh, so-so," replied Jimmy, evasively.

"Everything all right?"

"In a way. In a way."

"Chocolate business flourishing?"

"It was—up to a week ago."

"But now? How about now, Gollop?"

For a moment Jim scarcely knew what to answer, and looking up from an overly prolonged inspection of his cigar caught the humorous, quizzical twinkle in the friendly, keen eyes of his host.

"By jingoes!" he exclaimed, "you know something! You've heard the news. You know I've been fired."

"Yes, I do know it," answered Martin, with a grin. "I was—rather curious to learn how you took it. Suppose you tell me all about it. I'm your friend, you know. We've shared salt. I've been entertained in your mother's home. Now cut loose."

Jimmy laughed, sobered, shook his head and

said, "You see, that's where the worst of the trouble is unknown. I can't—well, I can't worry Maw. She doesn't know it yet. I've been trying to get another job before I broke the news to her and—well, I haven't succeeded! Those worth while are afraid of me, or else have no opening. For the moment I'm the under dog; but—I'm not whipped!"

And then he told the whole story to Martin, who listened, asked an occasional question, smiled as if at some secret thought, and finally remarked, "Your story agrees with what I've heard. But that man Granger must have been a vindictive brute to carry it so far. By the way, did you say your firm gave you the letter he wrote? Let's see it."

Jimmy took it from his pocketbook and gave it to the wise old man, who stuck glasses on his nose awry, and at an angle well down toward the point, and scanned the missive.

"Humph! Sounds like that sort of man," he commented, as he handed it back. "What do you think of it?"

Jim considered the question for a time.

"At first I was sore because he couldn't take a joke. Then I remembered what kind of a man

he appeared to be when I met him, and decided that it was just his way. Not a fault, you know, but something he couldn't help. Men are not all alike. Personally I can't keep a grudge. Life's too short for that. I never try to play, even, in a malicious way. If a man really hurts me, I 'most always think of his side of it, and if I decide I'm in the wrong, go to him and say so. If I think I'm in the right,—just forget him. If he gets the best of me in business, I congratulate him. That's part of the game. This chap Granger really never did me much harm and I think maybe that I, without really intending it, did him quite a lot. So I did the best I could to square it."

"How?" asked Martin with another one of those quizzical glances of his.

"I wrote to all the newspapers I could get knowledge of out there, and said that I was the guilty man; that I had played a fool joke under the impulse of the moment and that the Judge was in no wise responsible for anything at all that I said any more than he was for my actions."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, I suppose that was the most of it."

Mr. Martin laughed and shook his head, and

then said, in a kindly voice, "No, that wasn't all you wrote. I read some of your communications as they were printed. You not only apologized for your practical joke, but you ended by the declaration that you regarded Judge Granger as a man worthy of confidence, and asserted that if you were a resident of his constituency you would vote for him. I call that pretty forgiving."

"But—you see I had done him an unmerited injury," said Jimmy, soberly. "And so I did all I could to undo it. It was merely playing a white man's game."

"In spite of the fact that he had cost you your livelihood and done all he could to hurt you?"

"Oh, that had nothing to do with it! I did him an injury, and—I did the best I could to undo it."

Martin sat and looked at him admiringly, for a time, and then asked, "But what are you going to do now that all your trade is aware of your predicament, and are afraid to employ you?"

"I'll be hanged if I know!" Jimmy admitted, with an air of gravity. "But—I'll keep on trying. You can bet on that! I'll find some way out of it, even if I have to begin again in some

other line. They all of them have to admit that I'm honest—that's an asset that nobody can dispute. We can't all be brilliant and honest at the same time. Some men are brilliant but fail to gain confidence. Other men are honest but can't be brilliant. I'm honest but haven't proved brilliant, or unbrilliant, so I've got the best of the situation—up to date. Someone, therefore, will give me a chance. So I'm not discouraged. Maybe it's because I've got imagination. When things go dead wrong with me, I just imagine that they're not so bad, after all. Cowards and pessimists are the only ones to whom imagination is a curse. Why—even a crippled dog has dreams of hunting in his sleep, and he wakes up with hope!"

Jimmy's host seemed to ponder over this crude philosophy for a time as if bemused by its possibilities, and then suddenly straightened himself in his chair and leaned forward.

"Do you remember what you said to me in the train one day as to a man's having faith in whatever he sold? And you talked about an automobile called the Sayers car? You do, eh? Well, here's something that may interest you. The Sayers Automobile Company is going to re-

organize its sales organization. It wants a man with imagination who will take hold of that department. It seeks a man with ideas—none of the old, worn out, hackneyed stuff, but—a man with original ideas that will prove good. The Martin Company handles its advertising. Do you think—really and honestly think—that you could reorganize its sales department and bring to it additional success if I recommend you to the Sayers people?"

"You bet your life I could!" asserted Jimmy. "I've thought about that car a lot. And in the last few days when nobody seems to want me, I have wondered if it wouldn't be a good move for me to get into the line of motor cars."

Martin seemed to ponder over the situation for a moment and then said, with a sly grin, "Of course the first step for you to take would be to go out to the Sayers works, meet Sayers and his superintendent, make a study of the sales methods they have been employing, and then put before them a full outline of what you propose. If they like it, they will probably give you a chance to demonstrate what you can do. And if you do get the place, and make good, I believe old Sayers is just the sort of man who would

appreciate your work and make it mighty well worth your while to stay with him permanently. But I tell you this much, that he believes in efficiency and will have no one around him who can't deliver the goods. Now do you want to tackle it?"

"I do! I do!" replied Jimmy with fervency, stopped, and then emitted a groan and said, "But good Lord! The Sayers plant is out near Princetown, and Princetown is the home of Judge Granger, and—they'd lynch me if I showed up there—that is, unless I could get the infuriated populace to make another mistake of identity and hang the Judge in the belief that he was me!"

"Um-mh! Granger lives in Princetown, eh? That's rather awkward, isn't it? What do you propose?"

Jimmy thought a moment and slapped his leg with an air of cheerfulness.

"I've got it. I'll do as I did before—hide all of my face I can. I'll wear big blue glasses, and grow a mustache and get my hair dyed black. And if I can arrange it I'll go through Princetown like greased lightning, and stop at the works while there."

Martin chuckled with amusement and then said, "I think Sayers would send a car to meet you at the train if we wrote him when you were coming, and I have no doubt that you could find some place to stop out near the works. Did you notice if there were any houses near the plant?"

"Yes, lots of them. Neat little places, most of them. Sort of a model city, I should say."

"You are at least observant," commented Martin, and then promptly arose, went to a writing desk and wrote for a time, whilst Jimmy's spirits soared up and up until he was glad that he had been foisted out of the chocolate trade.

"Sayers knows I belong to this club," said Martin, returning to his seat; "so will think nothing of my letter being written on club, rather than business stationery. Besides I shall confirm these letters along with other matters, when I return to the office. Now here is a letter to old Tom Sayers, and another to Mr. Holmes, his general superintendent. Letters of introduction—both—as you can see. I think they will suffice to put you in right, and then it's up to you to formulate a general plan for a selling organization that will suit Sayers. If you can't show

him something to catch his approval, you'll have wasted your time. If you can, it's almost certain that you'll be given a chance to show what you can do. But—mind you!—he's been probing around on this matter for some time, and has probably had all sorts of schemes suggested and proposed, and you've got to show something that is better than anyone else has put forward. In that way it's sort of competitive. And—see here!—if I were you I'd not wait to grow a mustache and get my hair dyed and all that rot; but waste no time at all in getting out there lest someone beats you to the place."

"Good!" said Jimmy, promptly. "You just wire them that I'm coming. I remember the timetables. You tell them to send a car to meet me at a train that arrives in Princetown at ten o'clock to-morrow morning! I'm going to start west on the train that leaves the Pennsylvania station in just thirty-five minutes from now."

"Oh, that means an all-night ride and a break-neck connection, doesn't it? There's no such rush as all that," expostulated Martin.

"There's no such thing as too quick action when looking for a job," declared Jimmy with all his accustomed energy. "Good-by, and thank

you—ever so much. I'm off to try to make good! Good-by!"

Martin looked at him approvingly as if this was the sort of hustling he liked, and accompanied him out to the street. Jimmy bolted into the traffic, dodged under horses' noses, disregarded the shouts of drivers and traffic policemen, mounted a slowly moving taxi, shouted instructions to the driver from the running board, and the last that Martin saw of him was a hand waved through an open window.

"Well,' soliloquized Martin after this breathless chase, "if he moves that fast when at work it would take a cyclone to catch him. It strikes me that he's going to land that job, all right!"

CHAPTER XII

THE train that ran up the branch line to Princetown was comfortably filled when the man wearing blue glasses and with his coat collar pulled up around his ears as if they were cold boarded it and found a vacant seat in the smoker, into which he settled with a sigh of relief. He had passed through a distressing hour when the main line train was delayed, fearing every moment that he would miss his connection to Princetown and thus make an unpropitious start in the estimation of Sayers. And a very different traveler was this from the jovial Mr. Gollop who customarily sought information on all points pertaining to the country through which he passed, for now he was like the Irish section boss who sternly warned his garrulous men with, "All we want is silence; and damned little of that!" He was about to arise and discard his overcoat, when suddenly he subsided with a gasp. Two men had entered

the coach and taken the unoccupied seat immediately in front of him and one of them was Judge J. Woodworth-Granger.

Jimmy looked for another place, but none was vacant. The train began to move and the fact that other men came through in quest of a seat, found none and stood up, convinced Jim of the futility of searching other coaches. The car speedily filled with smoke and got hotter. No one seemed to care for ventilation. Jim's overcoat gave him the pleasant feeling of sitting in a sweat bath but he dared not doff it. The Judge's voice, loud and slow, floated back to his ears, and his previous discomfort was as nothing when he heard the Judge say, as if in response to some comment of his traveling companion, "No, of course not! Gollop! I'm so sick of hearing that man's name that I could wish it banned. His apologies only made matters worse, because there are idiots in this state who actually took that flagrant outrage as a joke! And you have observed what capital the Democratic press are making of it? They declare now that I'm vindictive because I got the scoundrel discharged! As if a citizen had not the right to protect himself from the villainous impositions of a coarse,

low-browed ignoramus who turns everything into a practical jest. And, what is more, if ever that man enters the state jurisdiction I'll bring the law to bear and make an example of him that will forever deter other miscreants from such enterprises. That man Gollop has done me an incredible amount of damage!"

Jimmy wriggled and twisted in his seat.

"By jingoes!" he said to himself. "I'm like that old fellow at the town meeting. I've just got to get out of this; because if that geezer ever spots me, the only steady job I'll ever get in this state will be breaking stone!" And so, to the relief of his seat companion, he seized his bag, as if about to approach his destination, slid hurriedly out into the aisle with an averted glance, and fled from the coach and back through the train. Standing in an aisle for an hour was preferable to the risks of having the angry Judge turn in his seat and recognize him. A place on the blind baggage platform, enshrouded in cinders and fanned by the frosty winds would have been comfortable compared with that seat. He went, in a panic, through the entire train and did not stop until he reached the rear platform and closed the door behind him. He breathed a

sigh of relief and for the first time that day felt cool. A brakeman jerked the door open behind him and said, "Hey! You can't stand out there! Against the rules! Can't you read that metal sign on the door that says it's forbidden?"

Jimmy turned and faced his tormentor.

"Please—please let me stand here! I'm sick, man. I'm sick! Forget the rules. Here, take this and buy a drink of lemonade when you get to Princetown if you can't get a prescription for something better from the doctor!" And he extricated a five dollar bill from his diminishing bankroll and tendered it.

"For that," said the brakeman with a grin, "I'd let you ride on the tin roof!" and banged the door shut and stood guard with his back against it.

At intervals the local train stopped and emitted passengers, but Mr. James Gollop clung to his platform as if having no frantic longing for a seat. And at Princetown he patiently waited until the crowd thinned, and with one eye glared through blue glasses forward to make certain of the Judge's departure. He descended from his perch and looked anxiously around to meet the inquiring stare of a man who was evi-

dently in waiting, and toward him rushed as to a refuge.

"Are you looking for anyone?" Jim asked, and added, "because if you're from the Sayers works——"

"Mister, I'm just doin' that same thing," the man replied. "I'd 'most given you up. Thought you didn't ketch the train. Come on out this way. I got her hitched to the end of the platform."

Jimmy carried his bag and followed his guide, who stowed him into the depths of a car, threw the switch of an electric starter, deftly let in the clutch, and the smart little machine picked up and slid away. For the first time for hours Jimmy breathed a great sigh of relief; but so apprehensive of accidents was he that while they passed through the town he shrank into his coat as a turtle shrinks modestly into its shell. He was terrified lest the man have some cause to stop in front of a shop. All he craved was the country, and a whole lot of it, with untenanted roads.

Out at the works he produced his letters as a passport. The big office thrummed with typewriters and activity. From outside came the strident sounds of industry and somehow they

cheered and encouraged him. His bouyant nature leapt to the call. He was eager to become part of it, and to be identified with it. He forgot his tribulations and was Jimmy Gollop again when led through an opened door into the presence of Mr. Holmes, general superintendent. The man arose to meet him and thrust out a firm hand.

"So you are Mr. Gollop, eh? Name's familiar around these parts. Hope you're not the chap that played the joke on old Granger, because if you are—well—you'd better stay away from Princetown, is all I've got to say!" And his laugh was so free and hearty that Jimmy acted on intuition and whispered most ruefully, "By heck! I am! Help me out, can't you? They'd——"

"Tar and feather you!" laughed the superintendent. "But—are you really the famous Mr. Gollop? Those spectacles——"

Jimmy dared all and swept them off. The superintendent scrutinized him closely and then exclaimed, "Well, upon my word, it's remarkable! You do look like the Judge's twin. What on earth made you look like that old stiff? You two must have come from the standardized face

factory. If I looked like him, I'd be sad. But I hope to heavens you aren't like him. I've as much use for him as I have for a three legged elephant with an affectionate disposition who is looking for someone to lean on for support. Well, now to business. I got a telegram explaining things. I'm at your disposal. We need a live man to handle the sales and publicity end of this concern if ever anyone did. That's the only part that the old man has ever neglected."

"I've got a letter to him also," said Jim, producing it.

"I was told that," said the superintendent, reaching for his hat; "but unfortunately Mr. Sayers is not here. Won't be back for a week or ten days. Gone scouting to see what the rival concerns have got in the way of improvements. They can't steal a march on him. He's absolutely the keenest man in his line on earth! And—see here!—I'll give you a tip. If you can make good with old Tom Sayers, you've no need to worry. He runs this whole plant as if it were a family. Knows every man in it. Calls most of the men by their first names. Gives bonuses and encouragement to the right ones, and fires the dead wood. Doesn't care a hang about anything

except making the Sayers car the best on earth because he's proud of it. And—it is! I say so!"

Jim liked that spirit. It promised well. And while he was disappointed not to see Sayers, he was ready to plunge into work with enthusiasm, and did.

Two days later he said to the superintendent, in the privacy of the office, "My conclusion is that your selling organization is a muck. It's been neglected. It's no good. It runs itself without any real head. In fact, you've no head to it at all except Wiggins, the old chap with antiquated ideas, but who is a man I would advise keeping on. He knows he can't handle it, and says he would like to work under someone with new ideas."

And then for a half hour he expanded while the superintendent listened, asked questions, sometimes argued, and finally approved.

"Of course," he said, finally, "your ideas are new. But they are ingenious, and I think very promising. I shall back them up. I like them. They sound hustling. I will recommend them to the old man for all I'm worth, and I believe if you can make him see them, adopt them, and carry them out, we can work together and make

things hum. Now here's a bit of advice. Old Tom Sayers likes plain, practical statements that he can weigh and consider. Put all your proposed plans into writing. Put down hard, concrete facts in terse English. Make it as brief as possible. Don't be afraid to criticise if you can suggest improvements. Don't mince words. He loves simplicity and frankness. And if you do as I say in that regard, and make plain to him the ideas you've made plain to me—you'll get the job, and we'll make a success because I'll work with you to make it succeed. I believe in the old man, and in what he makes, and defy anyone to turn out a better car than we can."

He thumped his fist on the arm of his chair as if challenging Jimmy or the world at large, and Jimmy was highly encouraged. There was but one great fear in his mind.

"Do you think—do you think—that Granger affair is likely to prejudice me in Mr. Sayers' estimation?" he asked, almost appealingly.

The superintendent frowned thoughtfully for a moment and then said, "I don't know. Honestly I don't! Mr. Sayers is a peculiar man. Nobody ever quite knows what he thinks until he opens his mouth, and then it comes out

straight and plain. No frills. No evasions. If he likes a man, he likes him. If he doesn't like him—that ends it. I don't have any idea what he really thinks of Granger. The Judge visits the old man's house when Mrs. Sayers and the daughter are there, but Mrs. Sayers is not the old man—by a long shot! She's a social climber. The old man doesn't give a hang about society, or pink teas. He makes automobiles and believes in efficiency. Granger's not the old man's sort at all. Too stuck up. If I were you, I'd wait until the old man finds out that you're the man who played the joke, and when he asks you about the inside of it, tell him the truth just the same as you did me. If you can show him, before then, that you are the man to market the Sayers car, it's my opinion that the Judge, and his likes, or dislikes, will amount to about as much as a tallow candle at an arc-light party. Anyhow, I wish you luck, and I'll boost for you because I think you deserve it!"

Holmes studied for a moment and said, "By the way, if you could dictate your plan for the new sales organization, I could lend you a bright

stenographer who is chain lightning at—well, what is it?"

He stopped and swung around in his swivel chair as a girl from the outer office entered with a card which she handed him.

"That's the name he gave, sir. He said he must see you at once, because he's the deputy sheriff."

Jimmy's heart lost a beat. The superintendent grinned, pursed his lips as if to whistle, and then he said, "Tell him I'm busy but will be at leisure in less than five minutes. Tell him to wait outside. Five minutes, remember!"

The girl went out and the door had barely closed behind her when Holmes muttered to Jimmy, "Here! Come here, quickly. Into this wash room with you, and lock the door on the inside. Keyhole it if you wish, because this sounds mighty funny to me."

And a minute later when the deputy sheriff was invited to enter he found the superintendent alone, and the listening Jimmy heard, "What can I do for you?"

"The office has been told that there's a chap named Gollop around the works here—chap

who looks like Judge Granger. You know what he's wanted for. Got a warrant for his arrest."

"All I know is that he ought to be arrested if he looks like the Judge," growled Holmes, and then, "No, can't say that there's any such a man here. You might look through the works. But—who told you there was such a man here?"

"We got the tip from your man Wiggins."

"Oh! Wiggins, eh? Wait a minute."

Jim heard a buzzer and then the voice of a clerk, "Yes, sir."

"Send Wiggins in to me immediately," ordered the superintendent. There was an interval of silence and then further conversation.

"Oh, Wiggins. Have you seen that man Gollop around lately? If so where is he now?"

"Why—why—I thought he was—thought he came this way, sir," stammered Wiggins with an embarassment that was palpable to the listening Jimmy.

"You thought? Mr. Wiggins, I'm afraid that some day thinking too much will be the death of you! What time does Mr. Gollop show up in the morning?"

"He's usually here when I come, sir," replied the perturbed and conscience-stricken Wiggins.

"Well, to-morrow morning when he comes send him in to me, but—Wiggins! Don't say a word what I want him for. You can go now."

A door banged, and Jimmy heard the superintendent's voice assume a highly confidential tone.

"That makes it easy, if he's the man you're after. I doubt that, however. This chap is near-sighted and wears blue glasses. But here's what I'll do. When Mr. Gollop comes to-morrow I'll keep him here in my office and will telephone you, then you can come out at once and see if he's the culprit. Will that do?"

"Certainly the very best way to do it," said the deputy sheriff, and then Jimmy heard him depart with apologies and thanks for a cigar that Holmes had evidently given him.

Immediately afterward the door opened and the superintendent growled, "Now you see how evil companionship contaminates a man! You've got me into this infernal mixup of yours; but—hang it all!—I can't see a good man get the worst of it on account of that egotistical, swell-headed Granger. And—besides, I've had a letter from the old man himself telling me confidentially that the Martin people recommend you very

highly and suggesting that in case you get into trouble through the Judge I'm to look out for you to the limit. The limit with old Tom Sayers has never yet been found. So I've got to make good. Besides all that, there's another reason that's entirely my own, which is that I think this shebang needs your services, and I work first, last and all the time for the best interests of the Sayers Automobile Company. So I'm not going to let a tin rooster like Granger interfere with our business in any way if I can help it. Where's your luggage?"

"Over in Mrs. Clancey's house—the place where you recommended me to stop while here."

The superintendent stepped to the door leading out into the office and beckoned to a confidential clerk, who promptly came into the office.

"Smith, go over to Mrs. Clancey's and pack Mr. Gollop's suit case and bring it here as soon as you can. Tell her Mr. Gollop has gone—called away hurriedly; just in time to catch a train; no time to pack. And—see here, Smith—you're to forget it all the very minute after the job is done! Understand?"

"Very well, sir," said Smith, with a grin, and disappeared.

Before the door had closed Holmes was at the plant telephone, and Jimmy was compelled to admire the way in which he avoided all waste of time.

"Garage?" questioned the superintendent. "Good! Tell Hawkins to get out that new roadster we fixed up for Mr. Sayers, see that she's all ready for a run, and bring her around to the office door for me."

As he hung up the receiver the whistle blew and outside could be heard the droning diminuendo of machinery brought to a stop, denoting that another day's work was done, and this was followed by the thrumming of feet and the murmur of voices as the workmen departed. The superintendent got up and pulled down the window shade.

"Just as well to make certain that no one sees you sitting in here," he said, as he again reached for the 'phone, called up his home and said that he would not be home until late that night because he was detained on business, and then proceeded in a deliberate and methodical way to clear up his desk.

It was just twenty minutes later when the two men walked out of the office and to the waiting roadster. The big plant looked idle and deserted. The superintendent gave some words of caution to the man Hawkins, took his seat, told Jim to climb in, and the machine moved slowly forward, picked up speed as if glad to be off on a journey, and began singing its steady, rhythmic song of the road.

"I've got twenty-eight miles to run to get you across the state line," said the superintendent, settling into his seat and handling the wheel like a veteran driver. "In summer I could do it in just twenty-eight minutes with this car, but it'll take a little longer now. Once across the line you can twiddle your thumb up against your nose at anything Granger can do, and go back to New York, or any other place you choose, to make out your written report for the old man. Either give it to the Martin people, or forward it to the works in my care, because I can't give you the old man's address. He jumps here and there like a kangaroo when he goes on one of his scouting trips. We never know where he is. Some car, this, eh?"

Jim's teeth rattled as he shouted his agree-

ment; but, notwithstanding his desire to get out of the state, he would have preferred to take a little more time for the journey. The frost-laden wind threatened to tear him to pieces; behind the goggles with which he had been provided his eyes streamed rivulets of tears, and he wondered how many somersaults the car would turn if it happened to hit any solid obstacle. The coolness of Holmes, who appeared to be lolling back in his seat with an air of calm indifference to wind, weather, and speed, exasperated him, but he dared not show the white feather and beg for mercy, so shut his teeth, clenched his hands and tried to keep from holding his breath.

Their pace did not slacken in the least when they came to two white posts and he heard the superintendent's shout, "Across, all right! Two miles more to town and I think we'll get to the railway station in time for you to catch the eastbound flyer. Looked up the time-table in the office before we started. Take chances on speed laws——" and then fragmentary words of comment not always audible.

They whizzed through the outskirts of a town, skidded a corner, saw a railway station from

behind which a plume of smoke and steam was ascending, and came to an abrupt halt by a platform. Jim had no time to purchase a ticket but made a flying leap with his suitcase and caught the train after it was in motion. He looked back and waved his hand at the superintendent, who was already turning the roadster for its home journey, and it seemed to Mr. James Gollop that this was the first time in several hours when he had been able to take a full, comforting, and free breath.

"If that sort of riding is part of the regular automobile business," he said to himself as he fell into the nearest seat, "you're foredoomed to be a failure, Jimmy, my boy! You ought to practice on something slow, like a comet or a cyclone!"

His equanimity restored he went to the Pullman conductor and applied for a berth.

"Got just one left—an upper—number seventeen. Here, boy, go and bring the gentleman's baggage to seventeen in this car."

"Everything is coming my way! My luck has turned!" quoth Jimmy, relieved by the knowledge that he would not be compelled to

ride all night in a day coach. "She's a joyous world, after all!"

So happy was he in his optimism that when installed in his Pullman seat he gave the porter a bright, new dollar, and began to think forward to the delights of the dining car. The man who had the lower berth in the section seemed one of those individuals who prefer to keep aloof from others; for, absorbed in a newspaper that he held high above his face to catch the light from behind, he had never even so much as glanced at his prospective section companion. As if he had finished reading something of especial interest he now for the first time lowered it and suddenly sat erect and exclaimed, "Well, I'll be confounded!"

And Jimmy, startled, recognized Judge Granger and retorted, "You confounded well might be! Toss you to see who jumps off this train—you or I."

CHAPTER XIII

"THIS," growled the Judge, glaring at Jimmy, "is an outrage!"

"Agreed!" retorted Jimmy, at first sufficiently annoyed to have wished that he and the Judge were in some situation where they might punch each other's heads, and then, reverting to his habitual good humor, smiling and finally emitting a chuckle. "You do seem to get in my way a lot. Honestly, you've no idea what an annoyance you are to me."

"Annoyance to you? That's good!" growled the Judge. "I annoy you!"

"You do! You do!" retorted Jimmy. "I suppose you've caused me more trouble one time and another than any other man I ever met. Isn't it about time we buried the hatchet and forgot all about that joke of mine up at Yimville? I've apologized in every way I could think of."

As if the reference to Yimville had proved

unfortunate, the Judge's face flushed with anger and he bent forward and shook a threatening finger at Jimmy and declared, "I never make terms with a malefactor. If you had an idea that I am the type of man to use as the butt for a silly, asinine jest, I'll teach you to think differently. Mark that and remember it!"

"Oh, come now!" Jimmy protested. "That's no way to look at things. It's unbecoming of a man of your importance to cherish animosity for an insignificant chap like I am. If we can't be friends, you might at least be big enough to leave me alone."

The Judge snorted with contempt.

"How far are you going?" he finally growled, after a prolonged inspection of the imperturbable Jimmy.

"Baltimore. Why? Like to get off where I do so you can keep with better company than yourself? You can get off there if you wish. I don't own the town."

This seemed the final straw to the camel's burden; for the Judge suddenly popped up in his seat, called to the Pullman conductor who happened to be standing at a little distance down the aisle, and when the latter approached asked,

"Isn't there any possible way of exchanging my berth for another?"

"Yes, do help him out, Conductor," implored Jimmy with marked solicitude. "He doesn't like me a bit."

The Pullman potentate stared at the two men incredulously, now that he noted their physical similarity, and, accepting it as a banter, remarked, "Can't see why twin brothers should disagree."

"I'll not brook any of your impudence," thundered the Judge in such unmistakable anger that the conductor speedily became apologetic, and consulted his book.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said; "a stateroom reservation ordered for Harmonsville has been canceled. You are going through to Washington, aren't you? Well, you can have that on payment of the extra fare."

"Let him have it. I'll pay the difference if he's at all short," Jimmy urged, hopefully. "It's very kind of you, Conductor, because he's not feeling at all well. What he needs is a long rest."

"What you need is a jail," growled the Judge,

and ordered his luggage removed to the vacant stateroom.

"See that the windows are closed, Conductor," said Jimmy. "He catches cold so easily. Frightfully delicate and sensitive. Been that way since he was but a dear little child. Do take care of him, won't you?"

But the Judge, purple with anger, stalked majestically away from his tormentor without arriving at any adequate reply, and Jimmy was left alone. In the gray, cold dawn of four o'clock the next morning, as Jim followed the porter out, he paused behind just long enough to rap loudly on the Judge's stateroom door and to explain, "Baltimore. I'm leaving you now. Pleasant journey!"

But presumably from the Judge's remarks, this little parting courtesy was not appreciated, although it afforded the cheerful Jimmy some amusement as he made his way out of the station. Indeed, considering that inhospitable hour of the morning, he was made fairly happy by what the Judge said. Furthermore, to palliate the dreariness of the winter morning, was the thought that now he could break the news of his

discharge to his mother because he could couple it with a hopeful prospect.

For two whole days, and considerable portions of the nights, Jimmy plunged headlong into his proposed organization of a sales and publicity department for the Sayers Company, and his lively imagination stimulated itself as his enthusiasm grew. Expert salesman that he was, and untrammeled by traditions of the motor car trade, his originality found full vent, and, all unaware of it, he proposed plans that would have been seized upon by any progressive and daring firm in the automobile industry. In fact "he builded better than he knew"; but, after his manuscript had been duly typed and mailed, he suffered anxious hours thinking of how this or that part of his scheme might have been improved, and went through all that mental agony with which every composer reviews his completed work when too late for alteration. At the end of the second day's wait he became fearful, and at the end of the third day was beginning to lose hope. On the fourth day he said, somberly, "Well, Maw, I reckon it was a flivver! I've got to get back to New York to-morrow and look for a job in my own line."

His optimism was being sorely tried; but his courage was still unweakened. It was while he was packing his suit case on the following morning that a telegram came.

"Meet me at Engineers' Club at noon tomorrow, Martin."

Even the message offered small consolation or encouragement; but it was his way to hope for the best, so he whistled bravely as he left his home. He put in all his spare time, after arrival in New York, in visiting automobile agencies and studying as far as possible their selling methods, and he absorbed information as a dry sponge thrown into a whirlpool absorbs water. He made notes in his memorandum book after each visit and soliloquized, "If nothing comes of the Sayers thing, I'll have learned a whole lot more than I ever knew about this car business, and some day it might prove worth while. I can at least walk up to a motor car now and look it in the face and shake its hand as if we were old acquaintances; I used to take off my hat to a taxicab, but now I regard 'em as errand boys

running here and there through the streets. This car line is a mighty big game, after all."

And it was with this feeling that he entered the Engineers' Club and was met in the hallway by Martin, who had just arrived.

"On time, I see—I like that," was the elder man's greeting. "Now, first of all, we shall have lunch, because I'm hungry. I never talk business during meals. I believe in relaxation."

"But—but—what's the use in eating when there's anything more important to do?" asked Jimmy, eager to hear Martin's verdict.

"Nothing is as important as eating when one is hungry," was his host's remark, and Jimmy had to be content. "Hope you had a nice trip out to Princetown?" was Martin's next remark, and Jimmy gave him a highly humorous account of what that nice trip was like, much to Martin's amusement.

"This—this Granger person does seem to bear you a grudge," he commented. "Have you made any attempt to calm him down by rubbing his ears, or stroking his fur the right way?"

And then Jimmy became serious and said, "Yes, I did try to get him to bury the hatchet when I met him on the train," and detailed that

unhappy conversation. "You see," he added, boyishly, "I didn't care much what he thought of me; but I thought it was my duty to get the whole affair wiped off the slate if Mr. Sayers decided to give me a chance. It wouldn't be fair to Mr. Sayers to have a man of the Judge's influence angry with one of the company's employees. If I get that place, I've got to fill it well. I've just naturally got to do it!"

"Um-m-mh! Do you intend to tell Sayers all about it?"

"Of course I do."

"But—but suppose, after he heard the story, he declined to employ you?"

"I can't help that," said Jimmy ruefully. "It wouldn't be fair and honest to take the place unless he knew all about my reputation out there."

"Is it your habit to confide all your mistakes to your employer?" his host asked, as if surprised.

"Of course," asserted Jimmy. "When I work for a man, I'm his and whether he likes it or not he's more or less responsible for what I do. And, what's more, I feel responsible for him. If anything fails in the goods I sell, I'm as hurt

over it as if I had made 'em. I worked for one man I didn't like, and he didn't like me; but we got along for the sole reason that we both believed in his line of stuff because it was honest. It was the only thing we ever did agree on. And I suppose I'd have been with him yet if he hadn't sold out to a company that began to make inferior stuff to add to the profits."

After luncheon they found a secluded corner and Martin said, "Well, young man, now we shall get down to brass tacks. I read that report you made and I can think of a few objections you might have to meet before you can get the position, and there are some other points that might come up and require explanation."

And then, with shrewdness, he began his discussion of Jimmy's plan, and no expert investigator could have made a more exhaustive examination than he did. Jimmy's wits were sharpened by this catechism, and his ideas improved and grew apace. He even admitted that he had studied the sales methods of other firms and apparently gained the elder man's approval for his activity and judgment.

The afternoon daylight had waned before they realized the passage of time, and Martin

consulted his watch and said, "So far we seemed to have threshed this matter out pretty thoroughly; but there's one very important detail you've neglected, and that is to state what you expect in the way of salary."

"By jingoes!" exclaimed Jimmy, straightening in his seat. "I forgot all about that. Do you know, I got so interested in working out this project that I never so much as gave the pay part of it a thought?"

Martin laughed as if delighted by such an absurdity.

"Well," he remarked, "if that's the way you handle your private affairs it doesn't look promising for whoever employs you. No, I'll retract that, and on second thought reverse that judgment. I'll say that if you invariably put your employer's interests before your own your sole chance to succeed is to become a member of any firm you work for. I suggest that you put that up to—Sayers."

"Don't quite get you," said Jimmy, as if puzzled. "You aren't having fun with me, are you?"

"I am not," asserted the shrewd old business man. "I'm in earnest."

"But mightn't Mr. Sayers think I had an awful nerve? Perhaps he'd not give me a chance at all and—I want that job because I'd like to prove that there's a little more to me than a comic supplement. I need money, but about the biggest reward a man can get is the absolute conviction that he made good."

Martin studied Jim's face with a look of warm approbation, but Jimmy, entirely unaware of the scrutiny, stared into the fireplace with eyes that seemed glowing with big dreams.

"If I thought Mr. Sayers wouldn't think me a fool," he said, almost as if to himself, "I'd like to have him give me a chance with these schemes of mine on this basis: That I'd go to work for him for my bare living expenses—I'd work for just half the salary I got from the Columbus people—and that he would give me a percentage and all the increase of sales. And—I'd like to take that payment in stock in the business, so that if I did make a big success of it, I'd feel thereafter, year by year, that I was hustling for myself as well as the Sayers Company."

"You know that it's not an ordinary corporation, don't you?" Martin asked. "No? Well it's the closest corporation I know. Sayers owns

seventy-five per cent of it. His daughter is the next largest stockholder, and his superintendent has practically all the remainder which, by the way, was given him as a bonus for efficient work."

"Phew!" exclaimed Jimmy. "I didn't know Mr. Holmes was a stockholder, or I'd have been more circumspect. Good Lord! I criticised the selling organization and roasted it from top to bottom, and even told him one or two things I thought might improve his plant. Just my luck! I'll never get sense enough to keep my mouth shut about things over which I enthuse."

"There's where you are wrong. The superintendent has given you the biggest boost I ever knew one man to give another. He says you are the livest wire he ever met and that the plant must have you at any price; says that he never met a man in his life whose head was so filled with new and original ideas and that half the time you had him dazed with trying to keep up with you. So, you see, it paid you to be frank and outspoken with him at least, and—Sayers thinks a lot of what that superintendent says! I can tell you that."

He stopped, relighted his half-burned cigar,

appeared to consider for a time while Jimmy, waiting his friendly advice, watched him eagerly, and then said, "Well, Gollop, I'll tell you something more. I've been authorized to go fully into this thing with you, and to decide it. The job is yours, on the terms you propose, save for this. You shall draw exactly the same salary that the Columbus Company paid you. You shall have a full year in which to prove that your management of your department is good, or a failure. If you succeed, you're made for life. If you fail you can expect nothing at all in the way of leniency from old Tom Sayers, because he's as hard hearted an old wretch as ever began at the very bottom and worked himself to where-ever he now is by hard knocks and worshiping efficiency."

Jimmy suddenly gasped, and then impulsively reached forward and clutched the elder man's hand in both his own.

"I'm not going to fail," he said, simply, "because that would be a slam on your judgment and—you've been mighty kind to me, Mr. Martin and—I can't throw down a friend. If for no other reason on earth I'll make good or bust myself trying, just because you got me the

chance. I mean it! I do! And——" He hesitated and then added, almost timidly—"I'm so desperately eager to make a big success of this that—would you mind, if I get worried, or doubtful—like a chap does sometimes if—if I came to you for advice? You're so deucedly sane and wise, and the only thing I seem to lack is plain horse sense!"

He was so ingenuous, so frankly in earnest, so open in his gratitude and admiration, that Martin, square-jawed, taciturn, and repressed, turned away to hide the sudden flash of liking that warmed his eyes.

"I'll take it as a favor if you'll ask my advice," he replied. "In fact, I'll probably give you a darned sight more advice than you'll either like or follow. Well, what are you going to do now?"

"Send a wire to my mother," said Jimmy, "You see, Maw's worried, and—it'll make her so happy that I can't put that off for another minute. Do you mind if I tell her that I got the job through your kindness?"

"If you wish," said Martin, with a smile. "You can step to the desk over there and find a form, and I'll have it sent from here."

Jimmy rushed to the desk and returned in a few minutes, with a jubilant face. Martin took the message outside to have it sent and was compelled to read it to settle a question of the count of words and read this eulogium:

"Martin finest man on earth. Never knew any so good and kind. Got Sayers job for me on better terms than I could dare ask for. Glorious chance. Martin will help me make good. Marvelous fund common sense. Can't fail when he so kind and friendly. Writing long letter. Love. God bless you. Jimmy."

"Lack of gratitude certainly isn't one of his failings," thought Martin; but somehow his face appeared neither harsh nor cynical, from which it might be surmised that he was not at all displeased. He sauntered back, rejoined his guest, and then said. "When do you propose to begin work?"

"I've already begun," said Jimmy, looking up at him. "Been thinking about it since you left. But—I can't see just how I'm to do it until I can meet Mr. Sayers and tell him all about Judge Granger. I think I should go back to

Princetown first of all and get full knowledge from the superintendent of our technical advantages over all other cars. And if I go back there Granger will have me pinched! Isn't it rotten luck? What a chump I was! That man hates me because we look alike. It's not my fault at all. I didn't make his lookings. If I had, I'd have tried to make a better job of it. It seems to me that either he or I will have to change his face. He ought to wear whiskers. A Judge without whiskers isn't any good, anyhow, I reckon. So here I am with the biggest chance of my life, and it's all mucked up because I can't get that chap to forget that I helped him out with a single speech I made for him up at Yimville. Why, if he had sense enough to appreciate it, I gave him more free advertising than he ever had before in all his life! That apology of mine should have made more votes for him than he'd ever have grabbed through his own eloquence. I wouldn't harm him for anything and yet he hates me. I tried to make it up when I met him. I went the limit. But he was so sore he wouldn't even think of sleeping in the same section with me, although I had the upper berth and never snore nor talk in my

sleep! He's a big man and I'm a slob; but all of that doesn't seem to count with him. He can't forgive me because we look alike. If I were in his place I'd feel sorry for the other chap. I'd hold conference with him about our mutual predicament. I'd send him clippings from interesting folks who make things for noses and tell how to grow eyebrows and how to flatten ears and make wide grins into sweet, diminutive smiles. I'd put him next to people who change gray eyes into brown ones, and purple eyes into greens. What on earth am I to do to get a passport into his state from J. Woodworth-Granger so I can keep my job?"

He spoke almost tearfully, as if contemplating an unsurmountable obstacle, but Martin appeared unimpressed by his woe. Indeed, he chuckled as if amused.

"It might take time," he said, "to persuade the judge; but—suppose you leave it to me. I have an idea that I can do it within a week or ten days, or at least gain an armistice. And you needn't worry about Sayers. I'll tell him how the matter stands. You can put in your time for a week or two scouting around car agencies here in New York, and in the meantime, can consider your-

self employed. Meet me here to-morrow at three o'clock."

Jimmy experienced several paradoxes in his surroundings when he stepped briskly out of the skyscraper wherein he had been entertained. It was nearly five o'clock in a dark afternoon, but the universe seemed filled with sunshine; heavy flakes were falling softly, but they appeared rose petals; men and women wore overcoats but the air was benignantly soft and warm; each sputtering arc light had a rainbow or a beautiful halo; street cars clanged, taxis honk-honked, the wheels of trucks screeched and ground across paving blocks and metal rails; but the whole blended into a strange triumphal march as if performed by some immense band of music. Mr. James Gollop had to fight an impulse to sing, dance, shout and altogether conduct himself with the improprieties that are chronicled against one King David, who played on timbrels and recklessly jazzed himself out of his job. Unlike King David, he came to his senses in time to commune with himself and to admonish himself.

"Steady, Jimmy! Steady! Whoa there! Back up! Ca'm yourself! Ca'm yourself. You've

got the job, but there's a lot of work to be done before you become part owner of the finest car on earth, the peerless wonder of the transportation world, the winged victory of the roads. Don't let your head swell, James. Better keep it solid bone than have it turn into a toy balloon; because the latter can be pricked with a bare bodkin."

But nevertheless his happiness was so great, his hopes so high, his dreams so insurgent, that he longed, most fervently, to share his glad news with someone. As he said to himself, "If I can't tell someone pretty soon, I'll just naturally blow up! That's all there is to that!"

And evidently the "someone" he wished to make his confidant was pretty well known in the back of his head, for he suddenly hurried out to the nearest corner and boarded a car that would take him into old New York.

As the car came under the big electric sign reading "Gonfaroni's" it shone up there in the heavens like a lighthouse to a homecoming mariner, and he blithely stepped off and hastened down the side street to the entrance of MacDougall Alley. It was dark, chill and deserted. Lights shone through the cracks of

one window at the far end, but the studio which was his Mecca was rayless.

Jimmy stood for a long time in front of it, staring up at its darkened windows, and derided himself for his pangs of disappointment.

"This can't go on any longer," he told himself, savagely. "To-morrow I've just got to know Mary Allen's real name. I'm a big enough man now—prospectively at least—to dare to walk into that Martha Putnam hotel, glare at the ogress who guards the pearly gates, and tell her to send my card up to Miss So-and-so and to step lively. Here I am, just bubbling over with glad news like a tin tea kettle on a red hot stove spouting steam, and I can't go uptown to that hotel and send up my card because I've never had the courage to ask her real name. I've been a coward all along, but now it's got to stop."

Nevertheless he did return to the uptown precincts and for a long time stood guard in front of the distinguished woman's caravanserai, hoping against all common sense that Mary Allen might appear. He remembered reading an article in a Sunday newspaper on telepathy, and stood across the street frowning at the Martha Putnam and concentrating his mind on the

object of his adoration, and beseeching her to come to the elevator, and thence down into the cold street in response to his great desire. But somehow the telepathy stuff didn't work at all according to propaganda. He shut his eyes and tried more earnestly until aroused by a voice. "Hey! You can't sleep in that doorway. Move on! Wiggle your stumps!"

A fat policeman stood regarding him. Jimmy was discouraged, for he knew that any policeman, anywhere, is an unfeeling wretch, who, if he met the great god Cupid on the street, would promptly arrest that light of the world for indecent exposure and perhaps carry him to the nearest station by the tips of his golden wings as if he were but a vagrant chicken destined for the sergeant's pot.

"Come! Fade away!" the enemy ordered, belligerently.

And Mr. James Gollop, crestfallen, faded.

CHAPTER XIV

AT exactly three-thirty o'clock on the following day in the Engineers' Club the taciturn Mr. Martin, after some further questioning, took from his pocket a contract and duplicate that assured Mr. James Gollop employment.

"I've been in a peculiar situation in this affair," said Martin. "I've had to fight against some personal likings and inclinations, and stand as a mediator; for I must look after the best interests of the Sayers Automobile Company as well as the interests of Jim Gollop. However, here you are. Sign these."

Jimmy signed the contracts with as glad a hand as if he had been affixing his signature to some document of inheritance that would bring him a million. He put his own copy in his pocket with as much care as if it were precious beyond computation.

"Now," he said, "when do I meet Mr. Sayers?"

"Sayers," said Martin, as he put the original contract into his pocket, "is going somewhere West to-day. You'll see him soon enough. His instructions are that you are to go immediately to San Augustine, Florida, to see what is being done by rival concerns down there at the beach races. I suppose he expects you to pick up points and information. Keep track of your expense account. Learn all you can. Then report at Princetown."

"But—about Granger! Am I to——"

"You'll be away at least two weeks," said Martin. "Many things can happen in that time. If I were you, I'd forget that the Judge is on earth. I'll—I'll tell Sayers about this matter," said his benefactor, with the first sign of hesitancy that Jim had ever seen him display. "And in the meantime, I'll do all I can to get that Judge to show some sense. You can be certain of that. Well, may good luck go with you!"

At exactly seven-thirty that evening Mr. James Gollop reluctantly departed from the street in front of the Martha Putnam hotel,

where he had taken up sentry go after convincing himself that MacDougall Alley was dark.

"Got to catch my train to San Augustine," he warned himself. "Can't put it off a minute longer because the meeting is on there day after to-morrow, and it won't wait until I can tell Mary Allen all about it! But if I don't straighten this matter out so that hereafter I can at least write her, or send her a wire, I'm no organizer at all and my chance with the Sayers Company isn't worth a tinker's curse."

As if he were forever scraping under the wire just before the barrier fell, Jimmy got the last vacant berth in the sleeper and, recovering from his Martha Putnam disappointment, whistled blithely as a porter carried his suitcase to the Pullman steps. He stood outside to enjoy the last of his cigar and was mildly interested in the final rush of passengers when a porter came rapidly wheeling an invalid's chair in which sat a man bodily broken and hideously scarred. The porter halted the chair and the man asked, anxiously, if it were possible to secure a berth.

"Sorry, sir," said the Pullman conductor, "but we're full up. You should have engaged one earlier for this train. It's always crowded now."

"I didn't know until half an hour ago that I could come," said the man in the wheel chair with such evident disappointment that Jimmy's sympathy was enlisted. "Isn't there some place you can put me? It's—it's like a day out of my life if I miss this train to San Augustine!"

That was more than Jimmy could endure.

"Give this man my berth," said Jimmy to the conductor. "No. 12 in this car. I can stick it through the night in the smoker. I've done it heaps of times!"

And with that he brushed the porter aside, bent forward, lifted the wreck from the chair and with his sturdy strength carried him up the steps and to the relinquished section.

"There," he said cheerfully, as the porter came bearing the cushions with which to make the invalid comfortable. "Now you'll be right as a top."

The train took on motion and Jimmy was starting to carry his suitcase forward when the Pullman conductor, proving that kindliness commands kindliness, came hurrying forward and said, "Here! Let the porter find a seat for you. It's pretty crowded out there now. Or, if the gentleman has no objections, you might

sit here with him until it's time to make the berths down. The day coaches and smokers usually get thinned out a little by ten o'clock at night."

And thus it was that Jimmy made a new friend.

"You see," explained the man he had befriended, "this race meeting down there means a lot to a chap smashed up as I am. It's about the only thrill I ever get since—since—I had to live in a chair. My name is Carver. Dan Carver. What's yours?"

"Jim Gollop," said Jimmy, puzzling his excellent memory to recall why it was that the name Dan Carver suggested something, and then, after an interval, blurting, "Carver? Are you the man who used to be a famous race driver two or three years ago? The man who wrecked himself in the Vanderbilt Cup races rather than take a chance on throwing his machine into the crowd at a turn?"

"The same—what's left of him," Carver admitted.

"Then," said Jimmy, "I wish I could have given you a whole Pullman instead of just one

berth! By gosh! You deserve it. The firm you drove for ought to have seen to that."

"Firms forget, when a man is no longer of use," said Carver with a shake of his head.

"Some of 'em do. Mine isn't that sort. But, you see, my firm is head and shoulders above the others—in some ways. The Sayers Automobile Company isn't one of these big, swollen concerns. Old Tom Sayers looks after his people."

He was in true form again, proud of his firm, boasting its merits, advertising it and ready to defend it quite as valiantly as if he had been with it from its beginnings.

"I've heard of it," admitted Carver, politely. "Suppose it's because I'm so out of the game that I don't know more about it than I do. My fault! How long you been with 'em?"

"Since about five o'clock this afternoon," said Jimmy.

The crippled record breaker took out his watch, consulted it, and slipped it back in his pocket.

"Long time, isn't it?" he commented. "That's nearly three hours. I've broken a few records in my time, but you beat anything I've come across. It took thirteen years for me to learn

that one concern I worked for was no good. It took you three hours to learn the one you work for is the best there is."

"But I believe it!" declared Jimmy, with his unquenchable enthusiasm. "Why? Because I believe in Tom Sayers. I believe in his honesty, and his reputation, and—well—because he gave me a chance."

"Know him very well?" his seat mate asked.

"Never met him," Jimmy admitted.

"Know anything about his cars?" Carver somewhat cynically asked.

"I know that some of those who have them brag about them," said Jimmy. "And I know that the men who work for him, from the superintendent down to the yard boy, believe in them and say so, and would tear to pieces a man who says they aren't the best. That's good enough for me. Know anything about cars? Um-m-m-mh! I reckon I don't know a thing on earth about 'em. If my life depended upon starting a car that somebody had handed me on a platter, I suppose I'd be a deader. But a man doesn't have to know it all to succeed. Noah couldn't have started the *Aquitania;* but he did navigate the ark pretty successfully, and nobody denies

that he was the first admiral that ever sailed the seas. Admiral Nelson and Commodore Paul Jones got there, somehow, but if they had seen a motor launch tearing down on them at twenty miles an hour, I can imagine both of them diving off the poop!"

Before they parted that night, the expert and the novice had become friends. Before the race meeting was over, Mr. James Gollop knew more about the merits of cars, the advantages of one over the other, and the prevailing failings and universal obstacles than he had ever dreamed before. Incidentally, he had established a friendship that lasted and was to be of mutual benefit thereafter. He jubilated when considering fortune. All things were coming his way. He would have accepted it as a part of the regular procedure had he found a twenty dollar gold piece on the pavement. His luck was in.

And so, like a happy victor, Mr. James Gollop of the Sayers Automobile Company returned to New York one evening and, knowing that it was too late to base any hope on either MacDougall Alley or the Martha Putnam hotel, repaired, in lieu thereof, to the palm-garden precincts of the place in which he had last

dined with Mary Allen. He made plans for the morrow, thought of what he might say to her, determined that the mystery should end, and was anything but discontented. He ate leisurely, enjoyed his food, and perused an evening paper. He liked the black coffee, and felt civilized when he resorted to the finger bowl. He got to his feet leisurely, well content, and then stopped, bent to one side, moved a pace and through a screen of palm fronds stared as if transfixed. What he saw was Mary Allen seated at a nice little table, inspecting a bunch of violets in her hand, whilst across from her, stiff, pompous, self-conscious, but entirely self-satisfied, sat the man who might have been Mr. James Gollop but who was, indubitably one J. Woodworth-Granger, Judge of the Fourth District Court. Others might not identify him, but Mr. James Gollop did and for a moment his mind was in a turmoil of surprise and anger. Granger! That wind bag had somehow, probably by mere accident, met the only girl on earth, taken base advantage of his likeness to one Jim Gollop, and was profiting thereby! How dare he! To impersonate another man under ordinary circumstances was in itself sufficiently culpable, but in

private affairs, extraordinary and personal, it became outrageous.

A great wave of indignation surged Jimmy Gollop as if he had been thrust into a turbulent sea and was being helplessly bobbed up and down thereon. He was undecided whether to create a scene by rushing forward, seizing the impertinent Judge by the short hair at the back of his neck, which country barbers had encouraged to a bristle, or to stalk deliberately forward like the long lost hero in the cinema and—after the screen had announced his words, "This girl is mine!"—scornfully indicate to the impostor the door through which the latter, crestfallen, must inevitably depart. For about a half-minute that seemed a half-century, he didn't know what to do. And then, upsetting all ethics and standards of the melodrama and the movies, he did just what anyone else would have done in like circumstances; stalked majestically toward the hat pirate in the outer hall, fumbled for his hat slip, presented it with humble fingers, got his head covering and his overcoat, and shuffled out into the street dejectedly to ponder over the exigencies of this calamity, this tragedy, that threatened to end the world. How dared the

Judge to look like him! What a dirty trick to take advantage of their unfortunate resemblance and impose himself into such a situation! It was incredible, and base. He didn't know what to do about it, because she was involved. He felt himself in a peculiarly helpless position. He could but pray that the Judge's intentions were honorable.

CHAPTER XV

AFTER a rather disturbed night in which he slept by fits and starts, mostly starts, and occupied the intervening wakeful hours in considering the Judge's unparalleled effrontery, Jim dawdled over a breakfast for which he had no appetite, reflecting meanwhile what he could do. Ordinarily his nerves were equal to any strain; but now he found himself fidgety, which but added to his general perturbation. For her sake, as much as his own, he was indignant over the deception practiced upon Mary Allen, and resolved to punish the impostor if ever opportunity offered. He decided that his first move must be to warn her. That, too, presented its difficulty, as his one certain chance of finding her was at her studio, and he doubted if she would be there before the late forenoon. He scanned the list of hotel arrivals and learned that the Judge was a guest at the Van Astor.

"That," he soliloquized, "is worth knowing;

because after I have had a talk with Mary, I'll call upon that human airship or write him a note telling him what one James Gollop thinks about him!"

He was still perplexed and absent-minded when he somewhat listlessly walked out into the morning sunlight and started rather aimlessly down town; nor was he aware that he was passing the Van Astor until disturbed by a sharp "Harrup! Ahem!" snorted out as if by a hippopotamus that had just emerged from deep water, and looking around saw the object of his indignation advancing toward him. If Jim's usual frown looked black, the scowl that was on the Judge's face was cyclonic.

"You unspeakable scoundrel!" the Judge exclaimed, as he confronted Jimmy.

"That, sir, is precisely the term I should have applied to you!" retorted Jimmy. And then, before the Judge, who was not so quick on the up-take, had time to recover, Jim poked his face belligerently forward and added, "The sole condition that prevents me from giving you just what you deserve—a punch in the jaw!—is that we are here on the street; but I'll promise you this, you infernal windbag, that if ever I get you

alone, I'll change your facial boundaries until you'll never more be mistaken for me."

"You—you—how dare you!" exclaimed the Judge, drawing back as if aghast, and considerably alarmed by the threat of physical peril.

"See here," said Jim, advancing a step as the Judge retreated, "we'll mention no names, but I'll say this: that if ever again you take advantage of our resemblance to force your attentions on the young lady with whom I saw you last night, I'll expose you. You should be ashamed of yourself. There is a limit to everything, and your actions are beyond the lines of decency—you—you—hypocritical blackguard!"

"Not another word! Not another word!" roared the Judge, as if he were admonishing a highly obstreperous witness in his court. "It's all I can do to keep from turning you over to the police, and——"

"And it's all I can do to keep from putting my fist into your face until someone calls for an ambulance! By God! I think I'll do it anyhow!" exclaimed Jim with such evident intention that the Judge got from reach not an instant too soon, and, deciding that he might as well continue his progress after such a flying start,

did not pause until he had reached the security of the hotel rotunda. Jim's first impulse had been to assist his departure with his boot, but after his leg had got half-way into the air he recovered his senses, and then angrily turned and walked down the avenue. Once around the corner of an intersecting street he stopped, got out of the line of traffic, and despite the coldness of the day, removed his hat and wiped moisture from his forehead.

"Good Lord!" he muttered, "what a narrow escape! I came as near to making an absolute fool of myself then as ever I have in my life. If I hadn't controlled myself at the right moment I would have probably booted the Judge; but would have kicked away my new job at the same time. Will I never, never, never learn sense?"

The fact that the Judge had opened a meeting with an insult that scarcely any red-blooded man could have failed to resent, did not, in Jimmy's sober self-arraignment condone his own conduct.

"What I should have done," he thought, "was to keep my temper cool, and let him know beyond any chance of misunderstanding just where we stand, right now and in the future. I'm not going to run away from that big bluffer

any more. It's come to a show-down between him and me! I'm done, not only with apologies, but, with side-stepping. If ever he sticks his nose into my affairs again I'll make him wish he'd taken it to a shipyard and had it armor plated. But how on earth did he happen to bump into Mary? And where? That's what gets me!"

He thought he could picture it all—the chance meeting, her cordial greeting, the Judge's joy at being hailed by such an extraordinary beautiful and attractive creature when all the girls he had hitherto met had been of the small town or tea-party variety, and his tacit pretension that he was her accepted friend and pal, James Gollop.

"I reckon he'd smirk, and bow, and try to be clever and witty, and all the time he'd be either patting himself on the back for his luck, or envying or hating me," thought Jimmy. "When I let the people out in Yimville think I was him, it was a joke; but this is a serious matter and—it's positively indecent! That's what it is! It's an outrage!"

Imbued with a frantic wish to have Mary Allen share his indignation, he started toward MacDougall Alley. And then his consideration

for her feelings and wish to shield her from distress caused him to ponder whether it were not the best to avoid mention of the Judge unless she broached the subject of the supposed James Gollop's actions on the preceding night. That brought him to another tormenting question, which was how long this affair had been going on. How long had the Judge been in town? How many times had he met and entertained her? And—horrible condition!—suppose of the two men she had learned to like Judge Woodworth-Granger better than James Gollop? That would be a tragedy. Never a doubt entered his mind but that the Judge would speedily fall in love with such a paragon, and throw himself at her feet. It was impossible that he should be such an imbecile as to do otherwise! Any man in the world would do the same. It was to be expected, in the natural course of things. Being something of an opportunist, he decided to stop pondering over everything until he was in the presence of Mary, and then to guide himself by his reception. He hoped that the Judge had, as nearly as his capabilities permitted, lived up to the high standard of the Gollop form, or, as Jimmy himself might have

expressed it, that the Judge "hadn't queered his pitch."

"It'd be just like him to make her hate me after one interview. Considering how I hated myself after one meeting with him I couldn't blame her," he admitted, dolefully.

With an unwonted trepidation he climbed the studio stairs and rapped on the door.

"Come in." Her voice, sounding to Jimmy like a long unheard and beautiful song, responded and he turned the handle and entered.

She was sitting in front of an easel and the forenoon light from outside lent finer lights and shadows to her face as with her head half-turned over her shoulder she regarded him.

"Oh, hello! It's you, is it?" she greeted, and then got to her feet quickly, and stepped toward him as if to inspect him at shorter range, or else as if wondering what mood he might be in at the moment. There was a palpable uncertainty, curiosity, and perhaps reserve in her attitude, as if she wondered whether he would begin talking pompous platitudes or, on the contrary, breezing into some whimsy. He didn't quite know what to say or do. He felt like a human interrogation point; aware of the necessity of finding out

something and adapting himself to that knowledge.

He had kept away from her when discharged from the old employment and sought her when his outlook was brightened by the new. He had tried to find her when his dreams were flashing fast. He had anticipated this interview. His imagination and love had so gilded her and her surroundings with glamour that now, as he stood there, awkward, irresolute, with hat in hand, everything seemed unreal. Everything seemed reduced to hard realities. The fire that warmed the studio was a real fire. The light that entered through the windows was real light. The studio was but a real working room, and she but a real flesh-and-blood girl standing there in a paint-soiled apron with a palette in one hand and a brush in the other.

And then her voice brought him back to earth.

"For goodness sake! Can't you speak?" she asked, and extricated a thumb from the palette, and turned to lay it and the paint brush on a littered table near her easel. Inasmuch as her eyes were for the moment diverted from him he succeeded in recovering some of his customary wits.

"Speak? Speak! I've got so much to speak that I'm smothered with talk," he replied. "Aren't you going to shake hands before I begin?"

"I suppose it's polite," she said, extending a hand which, with all the delightful inconsequence of a man infatuated with love, he had frequently craved to hold forever. "Suppose you sit down to tell it!" she suggested, withdrawing her hand from his. "I'm—I'm rather curious to hear you talk."

"Why?" he asked. "Don't I talk enough—usually?"

"Yes, but——" She stopped, appeared to hesitate, and then almost irrelevantly said "You've never said what you thought of my work. Do you think I should continue it, or drop it?"

Jimmy was so astonished by the unexpected that he forgot his embarrassment.

"Drop it? Of course not. How absurd! It was never in me to do anything very well," he added almost wistfully, "for I have no gifts. But if I could sing even a little, I would cultivate my voice. And if I but knew how to paint at all, I would work to paint better, always hoping

that some time I might do at least one picture. But—isn't it unusual for you to be either discouraged, or questioning?"

"Perhaps," she said, looking away from him. "But—suppose I had to give it up?"

"Why?" he cried solicitously. And then, remembering that all his recent worries had been of a financial nature, he was fearful that some wolf of poverty had thrust its head into the studio door. "If—if—it's money that keeps you from going ahead as you have been, I—look here! Your work mustn't stop. We're too good friends to be falsely modest. If—if you're broke, I'd like to let you have some money. I haven't got much, but—Mary—I'm going to make some. I'll—I'll buy a picture. I'd like one. I've always wanted one of yours."

She smiled a trifle sadly and shook her head in negation. He thought she doubted the affluence of a mere chocolate salesman and it brought his mind back to his own good news.

"See here, Mary Allen," he expostulated, "a lot of things have happened since I saw you last. I'm no longer Jimmy Gollop, candy drummer. I'm Mr. James Gollop, Sales Manager for one of the best institutions on earth, and I'm going

to make good. I know I shall. I feel it here," and he tapped his breast with his knuckles. She did not observe his gesture, for she had turned still further from him, and was looking out of the window as if half distracted by her own thought.

"Why," he blurted, "you'd be as unhappy without paint as I'd be without work. Rather than have you give it up, I'd—I'd send you down to Maryland to my mother. Why not do that? You'd love her, because everyone does. And she'd love you because—well—just because she couldn't help it. Mary—if you'd only go down there you could have a home—no fussy hotel, and—and—I'd be so happy to——"

She suddenly turned toward him with a tiny gesture, then laughed. He was rather hurt, and felt that possibly she was ridiculing his honest and generous offer. As if she read his thought she came quickly toward him and held out her hand and caught his and said, using the old jocular name, "No, Bill Jones, Pirate, it isn't money! But don't think for an instant that I don't appreciate the offer that comes from your big, fine heart! I do! And—I wish I could

accept it. I think I know what your home is like—and what your mother is like."

She dropped his hand and now turned toward the easel, smudged a blotch of paint with a slender finger tip in awkward pretense at being interested in her study, and without looking at him said, "It's not money. It's because the man to whom I am engaged to be married disapproves of my little hobby and has asserted so in most emphatic terms."

It seemed to Jim that the whole room was reeling, and that there was a great burst of sound, followed by a stillness so profound that the distressed beating of his heart had become loudly audible. His knees trembled. His hands clutched and quivered. He felt mentally and physically stricken, tried to speak, could utter no sound, and then, to conceal his hurt, turned almost mechanically to the chair she had proffered, groped blindly for its arm, and slowly subsided into it. He was pitifully thankful that she had not observed his distress; that she was still standing there in front of the easel. This betrothal was an intervention that had never entered into any of his thoughts or dreams of her. He had always pictured her as free, quite

free, following her whims and ambitions within the limitations of a meager purse. He sat there, stunned, for a moment, and then remembered, dully, that he did not even know her name. The absurdities of his position, and the futilities of all his long aspirations and love dreams seemed magnified through the shock of sudden and bitter knowledge. In a moment of bitter disappointment, he wondered how he had ever dared to advance from the accident of a chance meeting to friendship, and from friendship to love.

"I—I congratulate you," he said, lamely, for want of something better to say.

"On what?" she asked. "Because the man to whom I am engaged doesn't understand what this daubing of mine means to me?"

"No, not on that; but on being betrothed," he replied, and then added, bluntly, "You see,—I—I didn't know it. You never told me. No, you never told me anything about it in all these months in which—in which you've been just Mary Allen, and I, Bill Jones!"

He was not aware of the sorry tragedy in his voice that contrasted so sharply with the banality of his words. He felt that he was but a pitiful

jester who was like a clown, compelled to play a merry part when there was anguish in his mind. But—he must play.

"I don't know why I was such a fool!" he declared. "Why I thought it could go on in this way—with you as Mary Allen, and I as Bill Jones. You see—I may as well tell the truth—now that it's come to this—You see, I didn't know your name, or who you were! I thought on the day that we met in Fifth Avenue you were someone in the trade, and I was ashamed to admit that I'd forgotten where you came from. You knew who I was, but I couldn't remember you. And so, after that first meeting, I was a coward. I'm a coward now, Mary! Now that it doesn't matter!"

He sat staring at the rug and striving to his utmost to think of something to say in his own defense.

"Well," she said, "since you have been so frank, I suppose that I may as well add my confession. I never knew, until within the last five minutes, who you were. Therefore I had nothing the best of you."

"What? What's that?" he asked as if incred-

ulous, or in fear that he had not heard her words aright.

He lifted his eyes and saw that she was now facing him.

"It's the truth," she bravely admitted. "I never knew that your name was James Gollop, and that you were a commercial man, until within the last five minutes! If there were need I could swear it."

"Then," he demanded, blankly, "who in the deuce did you think I was, anyhow?"

"I thought," she said with a slight shrug, "that you were Judge James Woodworth-Granger, of whom I suppose you have never heard. He is the Judge of the Fourth District Court, seated in a small city called Princetown."

He was so astounded that for the moment he was speechless. It seemed to him that all his chickens had come home to roost.

"Granger? Judge Granger—that inflated, stiff-necked, egotistical bag of conceit! And—and—you thought I was Granger!"

There was reproach in his voice as well as words.

"Yes," she admitted, "I thought you were Judge Granger. But—please wait a moment—

I thought that you were different when away from your judicial position, admired your reticence concerning your profession, and—and I thought that I knew the real man better than anyone else. And I liked the change."

She uttered the last almost defiantly.

"I can at least thank you for that preference," he said, lowering his eyes. "I've come to dislike myself since I met him. He's bothered me a lot. Maybe I've bothered him. I played a joke on him one time and—he hasn't ever forgiven me, although I've tried to patch it up. I think he's about the most stupid, unforgiving, inhuman bounder that——"

"Please!" she objected, and Jimmy saw that she had turned toward the window, and so paused whilst she walked toward it, and stared out before again facing him. He wished that the light from without were less glaring, for it rendered her face and expression indistinct.

"It's not quite fair for me to listen to anything disparaging Judge Granger," she said. "That wouldn't be playing the game. Judge Granger is the man to whom I am betrothed."

He was incredibly shocked. Mary Allen betrothed to Granger! It was like the last blow

—his ultimate humiliation. Had it been anyone but Granger it might have been less unendurable.

"I apologize," he said, mechanically. "I didn't understand the situation. Judge Granger is—is a very prominent man."

"Quite so," she assented. "A man who is distinguished, and I think will be more so."

"I expect he'll be a governor, and then a senator, and—maybe a president," said Jimmy, helplessly, and feeling his own insignificance. "But—but does Judge Granger know that you knew me? I ask this because I'm afraid that if he does, he might object to our—our acquaintanceship. He doesn't exactly approve of me."

Somewhat to Jimmy's surprise she laughed as if amused.

"No," she said, "I don't think he does know that we are friends. Indeed, I'm rather certain of it. But—just the same, if you are such enemies—it's not fair for me to show friendship under existing circumstances, is it? See here, Mr. Gollop—that's a terrible name!—You could scarcely respect me if I who am engaged to marry Judge Granger were to stand here and

let you criticise him. There is a limit to most things, isn't there?"

"There is," agreed Jimmy, soberly. "You are quite right in your attitude. I'm helpless." He paused, got to his feet, buttoned his coat, looked absently for his hat, found it on the window ledge, and seemed undecided. It was the old, boyish impulsiveness that made him turn to her in what he believed to be a parting and say, "But—Mary! Mary Allen! It doesn't matter what I am, or anything about the accidents and the misunderstandings—nothing matters now—to me—only this, that—that you believe that I was honest to you and to myself when you were but Mary Allen, and I but Bill Jones!"

"No," she said, "nothing else matters. That is something quite yours and mine—our own. Conditions are about as we all make them for ourselves. Sometimes they run away from us. But we can't alter things that have been. This has been a mixup. Neither of us could help it."

He could find nothing to say, for he seemed involved in a cataclysm that had crushed him, and so moved toward the door. She walked by his side and stepped back when he opened it. He held out his hand as if to bid her good-by,

for the last time, but she appeared to disregard it and stood quietly by his side.

"It—it seems a travesty—a blunder," she said, at last. "I—I don't know quite what to do about it all! I feel as if this were a farewell. I—I don't like to think of it as such. You have been so kind, and so encouraging, and you are so frank and—Can't we have one day more? Can't you come back to-morrow afternoon,—here—and be just Bill Jones, the Pirate, for another day? I think we'd be happier — afterward — if you could, and if we could forget certain things. Say you will come."

And as he walked dejectedly up the narrow confines of the blind little alley after leaving her he loathed himself for his weakness in promising that he would.

CHAPTER XVI

IT'S a long way from MacDougall Alley to Fort George at any time. It is rendered longer when the wind is chill; but Jimmy, no longer the jester, could never remember how he reached there on that wintry afternoon, and its hills, bleak with snow, were no more drab and cold than the dead fires of his dreams. The skies above were leaden, with no ray of sunlight. Away behind him the smoke of the city seemed leveled like a shroud. Its distant monotone of sound became a dirge. Unmindful of the chill, he found a bench, brushed the snow from a corner and sat there for a long time, seeing nothing, unobservant of his surroundings, and thinking of all that somehow seemed left irrevocably behind. It was as if it had been ages ago! It had been ages ago since happiness had fled. There was not a laugh left in all the sad world that had abruptly grown old, and savorless. A vagrant, aged, dirty, ragged, accosted

him, begging alms, and without looking up, Jimmy thrust a hand into his pocket and took therefrom a dollar note. The beggar mumbled thanks, stamped his feet, turned away, and then came back and said, "Hope you're not down on your luck. I wish you luck, sir!"

"Luck? Oh, no. It's all right. I'm not down on my luck. Only—'They're hanging Danny Deever in the morning!' "

The vagrant shuffled away, shaking his head. He did not in the least appreciate the sorry quip. All that he knew was that sometimes well-dressed men who came and thus sat in the parks, were sometimes found in the same place by a policeman—and usually such men had holes, self-inflicted, in their heads. But long before he had passed from sight Jimmy had reverted to the thought that to-morrow was the end. To see her just once more, and after that—nothing to look forward to, nothing to hope for, nothing to dream about. Strangely enough it is the men whose laugh is readiest, whose mental sufferings and depressions are greatest. Often the laugh is but a forced cloak for grief. Well, to-morrow he would laugh! Be Bill Jones for the last time! Make a decent finish of the dream! Leave with

this girl he had so loved a kindly recollection of a strange adventure as he made his exit from her life! There should be neither sighs, sentiment, nor repining.

Despite the fact that he had slept so little on the previous night, he moved restlessly about his room all that evening, standing before his window now and then to look out over the lights that flared and glittered from electric signs, hearing absently the hoarse whistles of ships out in the harbors, and the clamor of street cars that surged up and down the arteries of the city and went heedlessly on with its existence. Jimmy wondered, as the street life of the night waned and the lights went out, if there were others out there in the darkness as unhappy as was he. His new employment that had so elated him with its promise of golden opportunity sometimes came to his mind, but now he felt that success was empty without Mary Allen to share it with him. It was not until dawn that he fell asleep, exhausted, and even then trouble pursued him in his dreams."

When he awoke, at noon, he tried for a few minutes to imagine that it was still a very happy, prosperous and promising world; but it was all

in vain. He sat on the edge of his bed, and again thought that if he had lost to any other than the Judge, it might not have been so distressing. He got up and looked at his own face in the glass, and hated it for that peculiar resemblance. It was certain now, after her confession, that all the time she had believed him to be the Judge and yet, because when with Mary Allen the Judge's very existence had been forgotten, Jim could not accuse himself of having fostered her illusion. Honesty would compel her to admit that. And, on the other hand, thinking it over, he could not remember that he had ever talked of the road, his business, or commercial adventure, because it was a rule of his never to "talk shop" out of hours. He thought she had already experienced too much of that and she had told him once that she detested chocolates. The only feature for which he could at all censure himself was for lack of frankness.

"If I hadn't been such a rotten coward, and had told her plainly after the first afternoon I ever had with her who I was, that I'd forgotten her name and all, it would never have come to this!" he soliloquized, and then, an instant later, reversed himself, considered that if he had been

frank he might never have got to love her at all, and—to have loved her for so long and to have been with her so many times, was worth more than all else. Could he but have that measure of delight again, and then die, Death wouldn't be so grim and hopeless as this present pass. He flattered himself that she could never imagine all his folly of love. He was grateful to Fate that he had never uttered such avowal and suffered its inevitable rejection; for now she could always remember him as a friend. Rejections, he decided, must inevitably leave unpleasant or harrowing memories. He throttled all his sad eagerness for the farewell visit and resolutely delayed it until late in the afternoon. He schooled himself to the determination that there should be no sentimental speech or action lest she suspect his wounds and perhaps be thereby saddened. He had come to her with a laugh, he would leave her with a laugh. That was the brave way.

When he entered the studio for the last time, it seemed in twilight, for the shadows of a mid-winter afternoon were already long. He saw that she had set out a dainty little tea table and his heart gave a throb when he discerned in its

center, in a cut glass bowl, the violets that he had brought her on the preceding day. They seemed to scent the room with a definite and yet elusive fragrance, quite like her personality that was so soon to be but a memory.

"Well, Bill Jones, Pirate, you are late," she said, as she took his hat from his hand, while he removed his overcoat and hung it on the tiny little cloak stand in the corner, thinking as he did so, that there it brushed, honored, against her hanging garments.

"The obsequies of a pirate are best held in late afternoon," he replied. "It's a time-honored form. I'm very formal, as you know."

"I suppose Mary Allen has to die, too, doesn't she? That's the way pirate romances should end," she retorted. "I don't see why we never hear what becomes of the pirate's lady friends. Surely any decent, self-respecting pirate who is an honor to his profession, should have a woman somewhere to either mourn his loss or—as I suggested—go to the gallows and hang with him."

She turned to shift the tiny brass tea kettle that was beginning to steam in the little grate, and, fascinated by her grace, he forgot to speak.

He thought he should always remember the firelight on her profile—there in the shadows of the room.

"Remember the time we had tea together in that funny little inn out on Long Island?" she asked, and then, before he could answer, laughed, gently, and added, as if pleased by the reminiscence—"and the car broke down on the way home, and we had to walk three miles to get another? And then we were so hot and thirsty that we stopped in the inn and had beer—plain, frothy beer—while the chauffeur was trying to start his old contraption into life. Um-mh! That seems a dreadfully long time ago."

"It does! It does!" he assented glumly, and fell to staring into the fire as if therein he could bring it all back to vision. "We agreed, then, that some day when summer came again, we'd do it all over. And now—there will be no more summers!"

Unconsciously he had betrayed himself in a despair of voice and twitch of movement.

"Are—are you sorry?" she asked, softly. "Are you sorry that Bill Jones and Mary Allen are finished?"

All his previous resolutions were forgotten,

swept away as it by the hand of grief. All his pre-imagined repression vanished. He was but the heart-broken jester now, impulsive, outspoken.

"Oh, if I could live these few times over again, I think I could die happy! Mary! Mary! I never knew until yesterday how precious they were. Never knew that when Bill Jones died, the heart of me died with him! I'm—I'm——" He checked himself, shut his hands tightly over the arms of his chair, and exclaimed, "I'm sorry I said that. I didn't mean to tell you anything; because I've no right to say anything of the sort to you—now that Bill Jones is dead! I can't seem to remember that he was executed in that moment when you told me of your betrothal."

She abruptly dropped the steaming kettle back into the fender and he feared that she thus indicated resentment of his outburst. She got to her feet and walked across to the window where the rapidly waning light seemed hastily pulling drop curtains over their brief romance and he, fearful that he had offended her, sat dejectedly in his chair.

"One imagines many things! One is curious about them, sometimes," she said, softly. "And

so—and so I wonder what you would have said, if Bill Jones had not passed out."

She stood as if considering something of grave importance and then, as if resolved, turned and came back until she stood near the chair in which he sat with bent head and shoulders, so unlike the buoyant, erect man she had known.

"It is but a week ago when being—being somewhat tired of neglect, I wrote a letter. Oh, I could kick myself for that! I suppose it must have been rather—let's say—familiar. It was addressed to Judge Granger. By return mail came a proposal of marriage and—well—I accepted it. Then he came on and—oh, it was a dreadful mixup! After just one evening together I knew that he wasn't, and never could have been, Bill Jones, the Pirate. And I didn't know what to do, or who, or what Bill Jones really was, and—and I was furious, disappointed and humiliated, and then you returned and—and——"

She paused and he looked up to find that her eyes were not on him, and that she was twisting her wisp of a handkerchief between her fingers quite as if considering whether such fury, disappointment and humiliation could ever be for-

given. He felt that he was on trial and that his future hung upon her judgment.

"But—but—it wasn't altogether my fault—Mary," he pleaded in a voice in which contrition, distress and desire were eloquently blended. "I didn't mean to be dishonest. Coward I may have been but—but—oh, Mary! What can I say or do to be forgiven? To be at least kindly remembered?"

He bent forward again, resting his elbows on his knees and clutching his temples in his palms as if utterly given over to despair. It seemed to him that there was a prolonged wait in which she was coming to her decision, an interval filled with portent and so lifeless and still that tiny sounds from without became magnified.

Her voice, hesitant, and low, but, to his relief, gentle, broke the interminable spell.

"Suppose—suppose I were to tell you that—that I'm not going to marry Judge Granger, because after you came here yesterday I knew how impossible it was and wrote and told him so. And——"

"Mary! Mary, don't make it supposititious," he appealed, leaping to his feet. "That would be cruelty! Tell me that it's true, and that I

am free to tell you that I love you—love you! You know that I do, and that there's no use in my trying to hide it."

She retreated from him a trifle, as if to escape his impetuosity, then, when he paused as if fearing to frighten her with his ardor, smiled at him and said, "Yes, Bill Jones. It's true!"

He caught her in his arms. For a moment he held her close while she made her last resistance, and then slowly lifted her hands upward until they came to rest about his shoulders.

"That's why I made you promise to come back," she said. "I—I couldn't let you go! I couldn't! I don't care what anyone thinks of it, I am what I am, and—I love you!"

They were suddenly aware of heavy steps climbing the studio stairs and she pushed him away hurriedly, bashfully.

"My Father!" she whispered. "I—I forgot that he was coming to get me. But—you'll love Dad," and then, as if suddenly remembering something, she laughed softly and added hastily, "I don't believe you even know my name. Don't forget it, now that Mary Allen is dead. My name is Sayers—Margaret Sayers, and my father's name is Sayers, Thomas Sayers, and he's

in the motor business and—for heaven's sake!—pretend we've known each other for years and years!"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Jimmy, panic-stricken, as she hastened toward the door. "Tom Sayers! My job's gone bust! I'm done!"

The door opened and her hand swept up to a light switch in the lintel, there was a click, and the room was brilliant.

"Dad," she said, trying to suppress some trepidation of voice, "I want you to know Mr. Gollop. And I'd like to have you like him, because you see, I'm going to marry him, if you do."

Jimmy had been tempted to run; but now stood bending his head forward, blinking, and holding his breath in astonishment.

"Martin—Martin—Mr. Martin—and you are not Martin, but are Mr. Sayers, and——"

But the man he had known as Martin smiled, for the moment ignored him, permitted his daughter to cling to him, and as he caressed her hair with tender fingers, said soothingly, "There! There! Don't be afraid of me, my girl. I've known this boy Jim for some time. I knew that he knew you, and I satisfied myself what sort he was, too, before things went too far.

I never did like Granger. When you first told me that you had met Granger here in New York, I knew it couldn't be so, because I had seen him going through Media City on the previous day to keep some political appointment. And then I met Jim, and—I fooled him a little bit because I wanted to know just what sort of a man it was who had dared to look at you, and to take you to a horse show. Let go now! Let go, while Jim and I shake hands. But—inasmuch as your mother has always belonged to the Granger party, I suppose—I suppose she'll just raise hell! That's a part of the affair that I reckon you two had best leave to me. There's time enough, because, mark you both, there'll be no wedding bells in this firm until Jim satisfies me that he can make good."

And then he turned discreetly to hang up his overcoat and hat as if unaware that Mary Allen, struggling artist ,and Bill Jones, Pirate, jubilant and unabashed, were again in each others' arms.

THE END

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